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THE

Practical Power of Faith.

THE

Practical Power of Faith:

ILLUSTRATED,

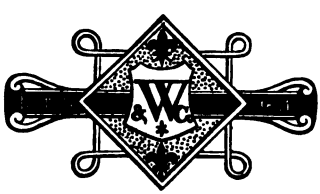
IN A SERIES OF

POPULAR DISCOURSES

ON PART OF THE XI. CHAP. OF THE EPIST. TO THE HEBREWS.

By T. Binney.

THIRD EDITION.



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TO THE READER.

THIS volume of Diſcourſes was firſt publiſhed in the year 1830. The author had then recently removed from the Country to London, and the work was more eſpecially intended for the Congregation he had left. Except as a memorial between himſelf and his former friends, for whom the Diſcourſes were originally written, it is not likely that they would have appeared at all. They were preceded, at the time, by "A Dedicatory Diſcourſe,"—a Sermon on the laſt words of the Epiſtle, "*Grace be with you all.*" This was retained in a ſecond edition, publiſhed in 1844; but, after the lapſe of twenty-five years, it is thought it may now with propriety be omitted. The volume has long ſince ſerved its immediate local and temporary purpoſe; and, as it has pleaſed God to give it a wider acceptance than was at all anticipated, it may not be unbecoming for it to lay aſide its original accompaniments. Two extracts only—the one from the "Preface" to

the

the firſt edition, the other from the "Advertiſement" to the ſecond—ſhall be retained. They are here ſubjoined, and contain all that it ſeems neceſſary to ſay on the preſent occaſion.

"This volume conſiſts of *popular* Diſcourſes,—that is, Diſcourſes expreſſly and deſignedly conſtructed with a view to awaken the attention, rouſe the faculties, and inform the underſtanding of a mixed or popular aſſembly. They were *written* with this view, and they were *read* in conſiſtency with it. Now, this ſhould be borne in mind. Compoſition is very different according as we write for the ear or for the eye; according as we eſtabliſh and illuſtrate a principle in a piece intended for private peruſal, or as we attempt the ſame thing in an addreſs to a general auditory, enforcing it upon their feelings for practical purpoſes. The following Diſcourſes are of this order. They were written to be *heard*—heard under the uſual circumſtances, that is, without the poſſibility of any part being *re*-read which was felt not to be ſufficiently intelligible, and by perſons the moſt of whom, like the moſt of all ſimilar aſſemblies, were, of courſe, unaccuſtomed to ſevere intellectual exerciſes: *Therefore*, a ſingle thought is often largely expanded and variouſly expreſſed, that, as it were, it might reſt for a time upon the mind of the audience, and be fully apprehended before ſucceeded by another. To ſuſtain attention, the argument is declamatory; to make excitement beneficial,

beneficial, the declamation is argumentative. Illuſtrations and phraſes are at times employed, that would be in bad taſte in a ſet diſquiſition, but which, in a popular addreſs, may be uſed not only with effect but propriety. The only exception to theſe remarks, and that, perhaps, but partial, is the firſt Diſcourſe, which, not being committed to paper till after it was delivered, partakes more of the character of a written than a ſpoken compoſition."

"In this new edition, there has been no endeavour to introduce improvements;—partly from the conſciouſneſs that far too much would have to be done if any thing were attempted, and partly from the hopeleſſneſs of altering to advantage a printed book, or of giving to an old one the benefit of ſuch advances in thought or modifications of opinion as, by poſſibility, may have grown upon a man in the progreſs of years. The preſent volume, indeed, is ſo ſimply practical, that there is no room for any great change of view in relation to its contents; there is probably not much in it that the author would not have written now, though perhaps he might conduct ſuch a diſſertation as that of the firſt Diſcourſe ſomewhat differently.

"The author is well aware that the work appears to ſome to be deficient in fulneſs and frequency of doctrinal ſtatements, and to want evangelical ſavour and unction. He is willing to hope, however, that *the Goſpel* is in it, and that his readers

may

may learn from it, if they will, the way of ſalvation. He humbly truſts that, with all its imperfections, it contains ſo much of ſound ſcriptural inſtruction in relation to the wiſe and religious regulation of life, as may make it a uſeful monitor to thoughtful and intelligent young perſons. It is a great and bleſſed thing to be the means of calling a ſinner from the error of his ways—a great happineſs to be thus called and converted; but, as it is a moſt weighty and true ſaying that 'innocence is better than repentance—an unſullied life better than pardon'—ſo it is a great and deſirable thing to ſecure the early eſtabliſhment of ſuch views of duty, and ſuch principles of practical behaviour, as may 'keep' those '*in* the way' who are being trained in it according 'to the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' and who, as diſcipled to Him, are to be taught from the firſt to ſhun evil from Chriſtian motives, and to follow after 'whatſoever things are juſt, pure, true, honeſt, lovely, and of good report.' The author hopes that to Chriſtian youth, eſpecially young men, the book may be found an appropriate preſent, and that they will meet in it many things, which, if duly remembered and obſerved, will tend to keep them from Evil, 'that it may not grieve them,' and to aid them in the cultivation of a manly, pure, pious, and happy life. The author, indeed, has not been without gratifying teſtimonies to the uſefulneſs of the volume in other reſpects—eſpecially to its influence in imparting comfort and

ſtrength

ſtrength to ſome that needed them; and he cannot but hope that, by God's bleſſing, good may be done to others, by the re-utterance of ſuch truth as it may contain. Life is a fearful conflict with many. The world is a place of tears, and of frequent, varied, ſucceſſive temptations. Terrible are the trials which ſome have to undergo,—bitter the griefs, intenſe and burning the ſhame which others bring upon themſelves by their folly or their guilt! Happy may he deem himſelf who, by a ſingle word of caution or encouragement, of guidance, reproof, hope or love, is able to help any ſorrowful or ſtruggling man to bear up under his burden, or to break away from the chain of his ſins, and, by directing him to the ſource of mercy, conſolation, and ſtrength, to increaſe the number of God's ſervants, or promote the happineſs and progreſs of thoſe already His."

With theſe few words of explanation, thankfulneſs, and hope, this new iſſue of his work is commended by the author to the reader's acceptance, and is ſent forth with earneſt prayers for the favour and bleſſing of Almighty God.

T. B.

LONDON, 1855.

Discourse I.

The Nature of Faith.

HEB. xi. 1, 2, 6.

Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.—By it the elders obtained a good report—without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe [*God*]; *for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.*

THE Epiſtle to the Hebrews is one of the moſt remarkable of the apoſtolic compoſitions. Conſidered as a compoſition, it is obviouſly the production of no ordinary man. It is not to be denied, that, at times, it is rather difficult to determine the preciſe meaning of the writer, or to detect the exact point of his alluſions. In general, however, the book is ſufficiently perſpicuous; even its darkeſt paſſages amply repay the labour required to explore them; and not ſeldom is that labour lightened, by our contact with ſuch as are diſtinguiſhed for incomparable ſublimity and beauty.

It is not enough, however, to regard the book as a remarkable

 compoſition.

compoſition. It is ſuppoſed to poſſeſs an inſpired character, and to be inveſted with canonical authority. It is uſually aſcribed to the Apoſtle Paul. Independently of ſuch arguments in favour of this opinion as it would be improper to preſent to you from this place, it may be obſerved, that there is much internal evidence in the writing itſelf to corroborate and ſupport it. There are trains of abſtruſe thought; ſudden and lengthened digreſſions; peculiarities of phraſe; alluſions to perſonal ſuffering; intimations of authority; ſtrokes of pathos; abrupt practical appeals; and other diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of what proceeded from the pen of that eminent Apoſtle and moſt extraordinary man.

There is nothing, we conceive, incompatible with the inſpiration of any writing, in referring, in this way, to peculiarities of ſtyle and manner characteriſtic of the writer—the human inſtrument through whom the ideas are conveyed, and from whom they derive, ſo to ſpeak, the *material* in which they are embodied. Of the mode of inſpiration,—that is, of the way in which the Infinite Mind adapted itſelf to the ſubordinate mind, ſo as to come into contact with it, and impart to it a portion of its own knowledge—of this, we can conceive nothing. We can infer, from general principles, the poſſibility of the fact itſelf; we believe its certainty, upon what appears to us indiſputable evidence; but of the manner in which it was effected we are hopeleſſly ignorant. The poſſibility of the fact itſelf is ſuſtained by the very ſame arguments which eſtabliſh the Divine exiſtence. He who made the mind, as he muſt neceſſarily underſtand its conſtruction and capacities, muſt be able to have direct acceſs to it if he pleaſe, and thus to communicate information, which could never be obtained in any other way. That this *might* be, it would be abſurd to deny: that it *has been*, we believe: but we believe it as a fact, the evidence of which is ſeen to be ſatisfactory, but the mode of which it is impoſſible to explain. We receive it, in ſhort, juſt as we receive the appearances of nature, and the ultimate demonſtrations of experimental

experimental ſcience; which we know as facts, and as nothing elſe. The philoſopher is well acquainted with the difference of the queſtions, *what? how?* as applied to the ſubjects of phyſical knowledge. He profeſſes to furniſh a reply only to the firſt. He obſerves, for example, or he tries, the action of element on element, matter on matter; he obtains a certain reſult; he knows both the facts,—both the preceding and the preſent condition or appearance of the ſubſtances,—but he is loſt in the link between them. He knows, as facts, the operation and the reſult; he can tell you *what* has been and what is; but he could not tell previous to experiment, that that reſult would follow and no other, becauſe he knew not *how* the ſubſtances were conſtituted in relation to each, or how they would be mutually affected by contact: he now can tell, ſince he has ſeen it, that in all ſimilar caſes, no other reſult will follow *but* that; yet ſtill, he cannot tell *how* it is that it does ſo, becauſe he cannot explain thoſe ſecret and myſterious affinities, the actual exiſtence, the activity, and the effects of which, are, as facts, ſubſtantiated by poſitive demonſtration. The *mode* of the operation of matter on matter is juſt as inexplicable, as the mode of the operation of mind on mind; but evidence, plainly eſtabliſhing the *fact* of either, is, of courſe, not to be reſiſted.

Such evidence we believe we have in ſupport of the direct operation of the ſupreme, on created, intelligence; in other words, of the inſpiration of the writers of the Old and New Teſtaments. That theſe men were diſtinguiſhed by ſome peculiar intercourſe with heaven, is a ſtatement, for which a greater variety, and larger and ſtronger maſſes of proof, can be brought, than for any moral propoſition whatever. Amid all the myſtery in which the nature of this intercourſe is involved, one thing ſeems ſufficiently eſtabliſhed; namely, that inſpiration, whatever were its mode, did not act, nor was it neceſſary for it to act, upon the ſtyle and language of its ſubject. We can conceive that it might ſecure all its ends without affecting theſe; and that,

in ſome reſpects, it was better it ſhould do ſo. It operated on the mind of the writer; on the ſtamina of his thoughts; on the ſubſtance and character of his conceptions; infuſing new ideas, or recalling thoſe previouſly poſſeſſed; but, leaving the language, the vehicle of conveyance to others, to be ſuch as the education and habits of the writer ſpontaneouſly ſupplied. Hence, the writings of prophets, evangeliſts, and apoſtles, who *all* "ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt," preſent that variety of method, ſtyle, and illuſtration, which might be previouſly expected from the different character of the perſons employed. And hence, too, it is reaſonable to judge of the genuineneſs of any compoſition, attributed to a given writer, from its internal reſemblance to the undiſputed productions of the ſame mind.

It may not be amiſs, perhaps, farther to remark, though the obſervation is not neceſſary to our preſent argument, that the individual peculiarities of manner which diſtinguiſh the ſacred penmen, conſidered in connection with that perfect union of object, that inviolate conſiſtency of principle and purpoſe, in which writers of all ranks and of every age ſo entirely coincide, furniſhes an argument in ſupport of that very inſpiration, by which it might be imagined thoſe peculiarities would themſelves be deſtroyed. It ſeems to demand the agency of ſome one preſiding intelligence, to preſerve among ſo many perſons ſo variouſly diſtinguiſhed, and during ſuch a ſeries of changes and ſuch a lapſe of years, the perfect harmony for which their writings are remarkable. It ſeems to ſtrike the mind, that ſuch an effect muſt neceſſarily be referred to Divine ſuperintendence. Perhaps, too, it might not be deemed altogether fanciful to obſerve, that thus the whole volume of revelation preſents a ſort of correſpondence to that of the univerſe. When viewed as a whole, and when as ſuch it is compared with the undoubted work of the Supreme Wiſdom, the ſame agent appears—and appears the ſame in both. We find him uniting ſimilar great characteriſtics; exhibiting, in the moral diſcoveries of

of his will, a ſtriking reſemblance to that *unity* and *variety*, which ſo obviouſly pervade the economy of nature.

The application of moſt of theſe remarks to the preſent epiſtle is obvious. We have undiſputed productions of the perſon to whom it is attributed, and we conceive that it is right to regard any ſtriking inſtances of its reſemblance to them, as a preſumption, at leaſt, of its Pauline origin, and its conſequent apoſtolical authority. I would beg, however, further to obſerve, that even ſhould the contrary opinion be eſtabliſhed, the book would ſtill be important in aſſiſting our conceptions of the primitive faith. It certainly contains the moſt explicit and frequent ſtatements—the moſt ample and extended illuſtrations of the prieſtly office, and the other mediatorial functions of the Redeemer of mankind. It exhibits the doctrine of acceptance through his ſacrifice, and repreſents it as prefigured in the principal appointments of the Jewiſh ritual, with a force and diſtinctneſs which it is impoſſible to evade. Hence, indeed, it has generally been by thoſe who reject theſe doctrines, that the genuineneſs of the epiſtle has been impugned. It has been ſaid, that it conſtitutes their main ſupport, and that if its authority were rejected, they muſt neceſſarily fall from their undeſerved elevation. To this it is ſufficient to reply, that it does not conſtitute their *only* ſupport; they may be more largely argued and illuſtrated in it than in others (for which very adequate reaſons can be aſſigned), but they are ſtated in others both with frequency and preciſion; alluſions, arguments, exhortations, commands, are alſo perpetually occurring, which ſuppoſe or involve them, and which thus afford that kind of indirect evidence, which, to ſome minds, is more ſatisfactory than explicit propoſitions. But, even allowing the book to be deſtitute of apoſtolical authority, there is a circumſtance connected with it, which (they who reject it being judges) ought to impart to it conſiderable importance as an expoſition of apoſtolical opinion. It is this. Whatever doubt may have been entertained of the author of the epiſtle, there never has been any reſpecting the period at which it

was compoſed. It is univerſally admitted to be a production of the apoſtolic age. Hence, *whoever* wrote it, this inference ſtill follows, that it ſhows in what way an intelligent believer, at that time, thought and reaſoned, reſpecting the intimate connection of the Goſpel and the Law, the character and work of Meſſiah, the myſterious requiſitions of Judaiſm, and the ſuppoſed interpretation of Chriſtianity; and even in this loweſt light, it is of ineſtimable value; all probabilities are in favour of the correctneſs of the writer's hypotheſis; if uninſpired authority is to have any weight, it muſt be more "rational" to attach importance to ſuch an opinion, than to one ſubſequently formed, however "improved" it may ſeem to modern ſagacity.

2.

ADVANCING, however, from theſe introductory obſervations, and aſſuming the inſpired character of the epiſtle, we proceed to the immediate object of diſcourſe. The paſſages we are to inveſtigate and explain, embrace a topic of unqueſtionable importance and of acknowledged difficulty,—that faith, "without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God." It is my deſign to attempt an illuſtration of the principle, as the ſource of all acceptable virtue, by a regular expoſition of the whole of this chapter. Of courſe this will moſtly conſiſt of a view of its *effects*, as ſeen in the lives of "the cloud of witneſſes," whom the Apoſtle celebrates as diſtinguiſhed for its exerciſe. This deſign, however, with the motives that have induced it, we ſhall take a future opportunity more diſtinctly to explain. The preſent diſcourſe will, therefore, be excluſively occupied by a preliminary diſcuſſion, in which we ſhall endeavour to exhibit ſuch a general view of the principle itſelf, as may be ſufficient to prepare the way for our intended object, and may include an illuſtration of ſome points to which it will often be neceſſary afterwards to refer, and which, therefore, it may be an advantage firſt of all diſtinctly to eſtabliſh.

What

What appears primarily to demand attention, is the firſt of the ſelected paſſages, which looks like a ſpecific definition of faith. "Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen." That this was intended by the Apoſtle to be a definition or deſcription of *a* faith is obvious. The queſtion with theologians has been, of what kind? whether particular or general? that is, whether of the principle with which pardon is connected, and which is ſaid to juſtify the ſinner; or whether of that more comprehenſive principle by which the ſaint "lives," which, in the hour of diſtreſs or temptation, aſſuages grief and invigorates virtue. The latter is the general opinion. It ſeems to be countenanced by the context. The Apoſtle, in the preceding chapter, addreſſing the Hebrews as believers, adverts to the afflictive circumſtances in which they were involved; warns them againſt apoſtatizing; exhorts them to conſtancy; and reminds them, by a ſcriptural quotation, that they were to "live by faith;" and then, intending largely to illuſtrate this truth, he gives, in paſſing onwards to the fulfilment of his purpoſe, a deſcription of *that* faith which he intended, which he was anxious they ſhould exerciſe, and the power of which he was about to exemplify.

It ſeems proper, therefore, to admit, that the definition of the Apoſtle is to be taken in its moſt comprehenſive ſenſe. It is to be obſerved, however, that, if the language defines what faith is *at all*, it may, perhaps, define what faith is *always*. That is to ſay, it may be, that faith, whenſoever exerciſed, and whatſoever it may effect; whether it be that which a man exerciſes after he is a believer, and as ſuch; or whether it be that by which he becomes ſo; it *may* be, that, in each caſe, it is "the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen." The compaſs of the principle may be more or leſs extended; the objects may be more or leſs numerous; they may be different, or they may be the ſame viewed under different aſpects, and for different purpoſes; but ſtill the principle, as ſuch, may undergo no change;—as to its nature, it may ſtill

poſſeſs

poſſeſs thoſe properties, and thoſe only, which are attributed to it in the text. Perhaps, therefore, in ſtrict accuracy of ſpeech, there are not *kinds* of faith. The principle is probably one. For the ſake of diſtinctneſs, we may ſpeak of that which juſtifies, and that which ſanctifies; that of the ſinner, and that of the ſaint; but, it may be, that we ſpeak all the time of a mental act really identical, only contemplated in different lights and relations; in the one caſe, as it has an aſpect towards heaven, and in the other, towards earth; in the firſt, as it is viewed in itſelf by the Supreme Mind, and in the ſecond, as it is ſeen by us in its effects. In ſhort, if it can be ſo expreſſed without impropriety, we may be regarding, perhaps, the ſame thing, in the one caſe as it influences God, and in the other as it influences man.

We ſuſpect that there is ſome truth in these ſuppoſitions. It will be our object to evince it in the ſucceeding remarks. Your attention will firſt be called to the language of the Apoſtle, as deſcriptive of faith in its moſt general and comprehenſive ſenſe; that ſenſe, in which it directly bears on his preſent purpoſe, and in which we ſhall principally have to regard it in ſubſequent diſcourſes.

"Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen." The word rendered "ſubſtance," ſeems, in its application to objects that are deſirable and expected, to expreſs ſuch an entire confidence in their future actual poſſeſſion, or in the ſufficiency of the means by which they are ſecured, as imparts to them, in relation to us, the character of preſent reality. That, tranſlated "evidence," is a logical term ſignifying concluſive demonſtration; it is here applied to things that are inviſible, to matters that cannot be ſubmitted to ſenſe, and it imports that the mind ſo feels the force of the proofs by which their exiſtence is eſtabliſhed, as to regard them with a ſentiment ſimilar to that, with which it looks upon actual appearances. Perhaps the brief phraſes, "confident expectation" and "perfect perſuaſion," may expreſs every thing we are warranted

warranted to include in the two terms; every thing, in fact, intended to be conveyed by the ſacred writer. It would then be ſaid, "faith is the confident expectation of things hoped for, the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen." The Apoſtle, it will be obſerved, deſcribes two claſſes of objects as coming within the ſphere of the general principle, and *that* principle as ſuppoſing the exiſtence of two correſponding mental ſtates, or,—if you prefer it,—as comprehending the exerciſe of two appropriate mental emotions. The entire definition may be expreſſed, either by the two diſtinct parts of which it conſiſts being tranſpoſed, (a very allowable liberty by way of paraphraſe,) or, by their being preſented in the order that obtains in the text. The firſt we ſhould term the order of nature, the ſecond that of obſervation. Each would ſtand thus:—"Faith is the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, [and] [connected with] [leading to] [terminating in] the confident expectation of things hoped for."—"Faith is the confident expectation of things hoped for, [and] [founded on] [ariſing from] the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen." In the firſt caſe, you obſerve, the objects are placed in the order in which they come to be perceived and felt by the mind; and the ſtates of mind are deſcribed as they are ſucceſſively experienced. In the latter caſe, the proceſs is reverſed. It is conceived to be completed. You are ſuppoſed to look at it as ſuch. It is therefore preſented by deſcribing the laſt reſult, and connecting it with that which neceſſarily precedes it, and without which it could not be.

Both parts of this definition we ſhould conceive to be neceſſary to a ſcriptural deſcription of faith, and both the mental exerciſes to belong to the nature of the thing; and, in either caſe, no more. The deſcription and the reality would thus equally be complete. In conſiſtency with this remark, faith might, perhaps, not improperly be denominated, the repoſe of the intellect and the repoſe of the affections; that is, the underſtanding perfectly admitting the Divine teſtimony, and the heart confidently

dently truſting the Divine aſſurances. This, at leaſt, is *that* faith "by which the elders obtained a good report." And it is that by which the Chriſtian lives and acts, and "overcomes the world." Its ſphere of obſervation is immenſe. It is commenſurate with the whole compaſs of Revelation. It includes all objects divinely atteſted, for it embraces ALL the "ſayings of God."

3.

IT will become us, however, more minutely to illuſtrate the text, by glancing at the principal particulars it may be conſidered to comprehend. Taking the parts of the definition in the order of nature, and directing our attention to the firſt, we may remark that "faith," as the "perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen," includes the admiſſion of *three different claſſes of facts*.

The firſt claſs conſiſts of actually exiſting ſpiritual facts. Such as, that there is a God; a ſupreme, infinite, eternal, holy Intelligence; perfect in all the attributes of his adorable nature. That he governs the world; is no unconcerned ſpectator of the tranſactions of earth, but ſuſtains certain important relations to it, and preſides over the vaſt affairs of its moral hiſtory. Here let it be obſerved, that faith conceives of God, not as a diſcovery, but as a revelation; that is, not as an hypotheſis demonſtrated by reaſoning, but as a truth eſtabliſhed by teſtimony. It is not God, as what is termed Natural Religion deſcribes him to be; but it is God, both as to manner of exiſtence and actual character, as he himſelf ſays that he is. Again; that there is a heaven; the place of the viſible manifeſtation of Deity; "the habitation of his holineſs;" where he is revealed, in ſome ineffable manner, to the enraptured gaze of beatified immortals; the home alike of redeemed and unfallen natures; of thoſe that have been ranſomed from apoſtacy, and of thoſe that are reaping the reſults of ſucceſsful probation: where is the glorified

glorified perſon of Meſſiah, who is diſcharging certain ſpecific offices connected with the enlargement and the ſanctification of his church. That there is a hell; a place of unmixed evil, where no circumſtance either arreſts or alleviates the conſequences of crime; where the natural connection between departure from God and the infelicity of the creature is exhibited in the actual experience of condemned ſpirits—of angels who kept not their firſt eſtate, and of men who neglected the means of mercy. All theſe are actually exiſting ſpiritual facts. They each have a poſitive reality at this moment. We could not diſcover them by reaſoning. The exiſtence of ſome we might conjecture, but of others we could know nothing. Of ſome, therefore, the exiſtence,—and of all, the certainty and completeneſs,—are aſcertained excluſively by teſtimony. Now faith, in relation to theſe, conſidered ſimply as inviſible things thus ſubſtantiated, is, the impreſſion of their reality upon the underſtanding, in conſequence of the admiſſion of the teſtimony by which it is aſſerted.

The ſecond claſs conſiſts of things equally unſeen, but of a different nature; namely, paſt facts, which have taken place in connection with the origin, or in the courſe of the hiſtory of our world.

The propriety of ſpecifying this claſs will be inſtantly apparent, by adverting to the third and ſeventh verſes of the preſent chapter. In the firſt of theſe, we are expreſſly referred to the creation, as a thing, which, by faith, we underſtand or admit. In the laſt, the very term employed in the definition of the principle, is uſed in relation to an object, not, like thoſe of the former claſs, excluſively ſpiritual and now exiſting; but a phyſical though miraculous event, a thing which occurred, had a beginning and an end, in time. "By faith Noah was warned of God of things not ſeen as yet." The deluge, (though the expreſſion may refer to its being unprecedented, yet it ſtill illuſtrates our preſent argument)—the deluge, previous to its actual occurrence, was to Noah "a thing not ſeen;" and to

us, who did not witneſs its poſitive infliction, it is equally ſo. To the Patriarch and his children, though its poſſibility and certainty were at firſt admitted purely by faith, it afterwards became an object of ſenſe; to us it never has been, and never can be that; it is "a thing not ſeen," eſtabliſhed by teſtimony. In this way, the whole claſs of facts to which we refer, are correctly contemplated. It includes thoſe already adverted to, namely, the origin and deſtruction of the primitive earth. "By faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." By faith, alſo, we underſtand that "the world which once was, being overflowed with water, periſhed." It includes, too, the intervening events,—ſuch as the probation and apoſtacy of our firſt parents; its effects on the religion and the hiſtory of the ſpecies; and whatever is recorded of patriarchal tranſactions. Also, ſubſequent events,—ſuch as, the extraordinary ſelection of an eminent individual, whoſe deſcendants were to be numerous and diſtinguiſhed, and from among whom the promiſed Deliverer was to ſpring. The various circumſtances connected with the character, the fortunes, and the favours conferred upon that ſingular people, preparatory to the coming of the Lord. All the facts involved in that ſtupendous event. His actual incarnation; his holy life; his numerous miracles; his ſufferings and death; his reſurrection; his aſcenſion into heaven; and, in ſhort, the entire ſubſtance of the mediatorial economy. All theſe things had ſucceſſively an exiſtence in the hiſtory of our world, and, ſimply conſidered as facts, were known to certain portions of the ſpecies by the evidence of ſenſe; but to *us* they are not thus known; they are "things not ſeen," and are with propriety included in the objects of faith. We believe them, not becauſe we have "ſeen, heard, handled," in the primary acceptation of theſe terms; but becauſe we receive the teſtimony which ſays, that "God in former times ſpake unto the fathers by the prophets;" that "in theſe laſt days he has ſpoken to us by his Son;" that "the eternal life" which was with the Father was revealed; that

that "this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world;" "was manifeſt in the fleſh; juſtified in the Spirit; ſeen of angels; received up into glory."

The third claſs of things not ſeen, conſiſts of future facts, conſidered ſimply as ſuch; as anticipated occurrences, things that are *to be*, irreſpective of their other relations. It includes, ſuch as, that there is a ſtate of conſciouſneſs to be entered upon at death; that there will be the reſurrection of the dead; the ultimate judgment, and the irrevocable determination of the eternal deſtiny, of all moral and ſpiritual natures; that "the wicked will be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord;" that there will be the creation, or ſomething equivalent to the creation, of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein ſhall dwell righteouſneſs;" into which the ſaved and ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be permitted to enter, and where, in his preſence, and as his, they ſhall commence a career of boundleſs and beatific perfection.

Theſe three claſſes of paſt, preſent, and future facts, are all comprehended in "the things not ſeen;" and the "perfect perſuaſion" that they are, were, and are to be, conſtitutes the firſt element in the complex principle denominated faith. In relation to theſe, it is the *eye* of the mind; it enables it, as it were, to realize, to perceive, to ſurvey them; to regard ſpiritual and diſtant facts with the conſciouſneſs and conviction belonging to viſible and preſent ſubſiſtences. The principle is thus penetrating and powerful; and it expatiates, as you perceive, in conſiſtency with our former remark, over a field of immenſe extent. Suffer me, however, to remind you, that this field, though immenſe, is limited; it is confined by the ſtatements and the diſcoveries of the Record; it embraces *all* that is there, but *nothing elſe*. The principle is not imagination giving ſubſtantial exiſtence either to the probabilities or the fictions of philoſophy—to the rational or the romantic ſpeculations of intellect and genius, in their attempts to penetrate the ſpiritual

ſtate;

ſtate; to trace the moral hiſtory of the ſpecies; or, to conjecture its future conſummation; but, it may be ſaid to be imagination aiding the intellect in its ſimple reception of the Divine teſtimony. Every human conceit is abandoned, but every "ſaying of God" is felt to contain a certainty and a fact; and faith, as the perfect perſuaſion of this, is, in the appropriate language of Scripture, "*ſeeing* the things that are inviſible."

4.

IT is next to be conſidered, that in his deſcription of faith, the Apoſtle connects with this perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, "the confident expectation of things hoped for." It is not enough, it ſeems, that the facts, as ſuch, are admitted; that they are contemplated as exiſting realities, or as a ſeries of events. This view can be taken of them by any mind, in any world, whatever its moral circumſtances or character. Something more is requiſite in man. They are to be viewed by him in their peculiar relation to humanity. He is to conſider their adaptation to himſelf—the end they are deſigned to accompliſh—the reaſon why to *him* they have been revealed. They are to be aſſociated, therefore, with the gracious aſſurances, which are either expreſſed in words, and appended to their annunciation in the Record; or, which they themſelves convey, by the language they utter to attentive reaſon. The moral meaning, in ſhort, of "the things not ſeen" is to be interpreted, and to be ſucceeded by correſponding emotions; and this meaning will be found to be the promiſe of "good things to come," and, therefore, of "things to be hoped for."

Theſe things comprehend all that is neceſſary for the comfort and the virtue of a ſinful intelligence, ſtruggling through a ſtate of trial and temptation. They include all that can be enjoyed on earth, and all that is expected in heaven: all that may be required by preſent ignorance, weakneſs, and viciſſitude; and all that enters into the idea of ultimate perfection. It is unneceſſary

unneceſſary ſo formally to arrange, or ſo minutely to illuſtrate theſe particulars, as we arranged and illuſtrated thoſe of the preceding diviſion of the diſcourſe. A very brief and general enumeration will ſuffice. "The things hoped for" may be ſaid to be ſuch as, the pardon of ſin—the forgiveneſs of daily imperfection and infirmity. The influences of ſanctifying grace. Spiritual ſtrength to ſubdue tendencies and habits of evil. Light in ſtudying the Scriptures. Wiſdom to diſcover, and ability to obey the will of God. The Divine preſence in worſhip; the Divine aid in temptation; the Divine ſupport in affliction and death. And, finally, the fulfilment of all that is included in that part of ſalvation which is "yet to be revealed"—a glorious reſurrection, a union with the whole of the redeemed church, the conſcious attainment, and the everlaſting ſecurity, of perfect virtue and perfect bliſs.

Of theſe things, faith, it is ſaid, is the "ſubſtance," the confident expectation. It views them not merely as realities, but as realities to be poſſeſſed; which are actually offered to the reception of man, and are ſecured to him by infallible promiſes, and adequate inſtrumentality. As with reſpect to the "things not ſeen," faith, we ſaid, might be denominated the *eye*—ſo, with reſpect to the "things hoped for," it might be denominated the *hand*—of the mind. It is that by which it lays hold of, appropriates, apprehends them. It ſo implicitly receives the Divine aſſurances, that it acts, as having the bleſſings to be poſſeſſed now, and certain of thoſe to be poſſeſſed hereafter. It thus gives a preſent ſubſiſtence to the eſſence of future expectation, and extracts a ſenſible enjoyment, and imbibes a poſitive ſtrength, from whatever is adapted to immediate neceſſity.

Now, my brethren, it was faith in this large and general ſenſe—faith, of this comprehenſive graſp, ſteady maturity, and invincible robuſtneſs, that the Apoſtle meant to deſcribe in the firſt verſe of the chapter. This is *that* faith "for which the elders obtained a good report;" for which they received, that

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is to ſay, the approving teſtimony of Jehovah; have ſince been celebrated in the church; and are preſented as an example to ſucceſſive generations. This principle was the very element of their ſpiritual exiſtence. They lived by it. It was the means of all their religious and moral excellence; and hence, it is eaſy to underſtand why the Apoſtle urged its cultivation by the Hebrew believers, to ſecure their attachment to truth, and their perſeverance in virtue. In future diſcourſes it will be our buſineſs to illuſtrate the practical power of the principle in ſpecific inſtances—in individual character and particular effects: at preſent, we ſhall merely ſhow, in a brief remark, how it comes to be in actual poſſeſſion of this power; and how he, who lives habitually under its influence, *muſt* obtain a good report.

As "the perſuaſion of things not ſeen," it ſuppoſes the mind to be perfectly ſubmiſſive to the higheſt authority; the reaſon implicitly acquieſces in all that is ſpoken from the throne; hence, the elements of man's religion, that is, all neceſſary knowledge reſpecting the Supreme Nature, the circumſtances of humanity, the means of happineſs, and ſo on—are eſtabliſhed on a permanent baſis, and thus, intellectual anxiety, ſcepticiſm, and diſquietude, terminate for ever. As ſuch, too, it excites to the purſuit of excellence, by unveiling, as it were, the worlds that are not ſeen: it thus counteracts the inceſſant impreſſions of ſenſible objects; it animates and directs, by diſcovering the myſteries of our ſpiritual nature; it transforms into poſitive facts, the otherwiſe unſubſtantiated truth, which has often been vaguely embodied in the dreams of ſuperſtition and the conjectures of philoſophy; in ſhort, a field of viſion is opened to the eye of the ſoul, repleniſhed with all that can aggravate the deſire of virtuous attainment. As "the expectation of things hoped for," it tends to the very ſame reſult. It thus brings to our weak, ſenſitive, ſuffering nature, appropriate and requiſite aſſiſtance—nutriment to ſupport, and cordials to reſtore. It removes the preſſure of guilt, and, by promoting peace between the

the ſoul and God, it gives new and irreſiſtible motives to obedience; it makes obedience poſſible, by placing it on a new ground, and urging it for new purpoſes; all the feeling previouſly expended in diſtraction or deſpair, is purified and preſerved, and bent with delighted intenſity to the conſtant fulfilment of Chriſtian obligation. As ſuch, too, it penetrates the perplexities of Providence; it confides, in ſpite of appearances, in ſuperintending benevolence and rectitude; it anticipates the *reſult*, ſees *that* to be good, though it cannot entirely comprehend the proceſs; and thus, it both promotes the peace of the mind, and prompts the man to "maintain his integrity." As ſuch, alſo, it realizes the "refuge and ſtrength" which we have in God—the influences which are waiting to be ours at the moment of danger,—and by theſe, thus obtained, the believer's virtue is at once preſerved and augmented. In ſhort, it expects great things, and, therefore, it both receives and performs them. The man who in this ſenſe is "ſtrong in faith," reſolutely relying on the promiſes of God, becomes, as it were, virtually inveſted with the Divine attributes; they are exerted *for* him, and the effect, on certain occaſions, is the ſame as if they were exerted *by* him. We wonder not that he ſhould ſuſtain or achieve what appears impoſſible, for a power is his, "both to will and to do," of Divine operation and Divine vigour. My brethren, this is the nature, and theſe are the effects of that faith of which we are to diſcourſe; that to which the elders owed all their moral ſuperiority, and by which, in proportion as we poſſeſs it, we ourſelves are to overcome the world. This is the ſecret of all the ſpiritual energy that has ever been exerted in the church. By this, believers, in every age, have wreſtled with God, reſiſted temptation, ſuſtained calamity, and triumphed in death. By this, they have ſeen what the natural man could not ſee; they have obtained what he could not poſſeſs; and thus, combining looking at the inviſible, with laying hold of Almighty ſtrength, they have been animated to deeds of illuſtrious virtue, and

have "perfected" their faith by works;—by works, which nothing but this principle could ſuggeſt or produce; by works, the germ of which is as neceſſarily inherent in the principle, as light in the ſun, or excellence in God.

5.

SO far, we have attempted an illuſtration of what may be termed the faith of the ſaint. We have explained the apoſtolic deſcription of the general principle; we have ſhown the extenſive ſphere in which, as exerciſed by the believer, it moves and acts; and the admirable influence it is adapted to exert upon his perſonal virtue. We ſhall now advance to the illuſtration of another topic. It will be our object to ſhow, that the very ſame deſcription of the principle, as to its ſpecific properties, may be applied to what we term the faith of the ſinner—that is, of man as man, in firſt receiving "the knowledge of the truth that he may be ſaved." In ſuch a perſon, as has already been remarked, the ſphere of the principle may be leſs extended, its objects may be fewer, they may be viewed in a different aſpect and for different purpoſes, than when contemplated by the perſon otherwiſe denominated: but, ſtill, as a principle, his faith is the ſame; it includes both the elements aſcribed to faith in the text; it is "the perſuaſion of things not ſeen, and the expectation of things hoped for."

To evince, according to the language juſt employed, that *thus* "a man is to receive the knowledge of the truth that he may be ſaved," we cannot do better perhaps than advert to the Apoſtle's deſcription of the way of ſalvation. "Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." Here is a call to the exerciſe of juſtifying faith; a ſtatement, to an ignorant and ſinful man, of that "belief" by which he was to paſs from a ſtate of condemnation to one of acceptance. Let us ſee whether the properties obviouſly eſſential to *this* faith, be not preciſely thoſe which belong to *that* already illuſtrated.

"Believe

"Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Now, this, you obſerve, previous to explanation, means nothing. You can attach to the words no definite ſenſe, and therefore you have no clear conception of the mental exerciſe they ſeem to demand. It cannot be ſuppoſed that their intended import is, "admit the fact—believe that there has been ſuch a perſon as Jeſus Chriſt." This fact, indeed, *is* to be admitted; but, in itſelf, thus nakedly propoſed, what connection can it have with a man's being "*ſaved?*" You may have the moſt perfect perſuaſion, the moſt aſſured belief, of the fact, that "Jeſus Chriſt lived," but this, of itſelf, can have no more influence upon your character and ſtate, than a belief of the exiſtence of any other perſon. Thus ſimply admitted, the truth has no moral power, becauſe it has no moral meaning; it reveals nothing to your moral nature; it involves nothing to impreſs your moral ſentiments—to excite or direct your moral ſenſibility. In ſhort, the belief of the thing "not ſeen," is unconnected with the expectation of any thing "hoped for." Advance a ſtep farther. "Believe that Jeſus Chriſt was crucified." Here is another truth, another fact. Here is the introduction of an idea, which Chriſtians are accuſtomed to regard as of pre-eminent importance. The circumſtance of the peculiar death of the perſon ſpoken of in the paſſage, is added to the preceding propoſition. But this, you will again obſerve, if it be unexplained, *means* nothing—nothing to *you*. To *you*, the crucifixion of the perſon denominated Jeſus Chriſt, conſidered ſimply as a fact,—ſtated as ſuch without any additional idea, is no more than the crucifixion of any other individual. The propoſition "that Jeſus Chriſt was crucified," like the propoſition "that Jeſus Chriſt lived," has in itſelf no moral ſignificancy. Again, therefore, nothing is revealed to your moral nature. Nothing is made known that can be ſuppoſed to have an influence on a man's being "ſaved." And this for the ſame reaſon, becauſe the thing "not ſeen" is unconnected with anything "hoped for." Advance farther—far as it is poſſible to proceed. Let the apoſtolic direction be

explained in all its extent. Let the Divine dignity of the Lord be ſtated; his appearance, and the purpoſe of his appearance, "in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh;" his holy life; his vicarious ſufferings; his atonement and ſacrifice; his reſurrection from the dead; and his advocacy in heaven: let theſe be preſented, and it is inſtantly perceived, that there is in all this, a voice and language which cannot but be heard. There is a revelation here to our nature and feelings—to the moral, as well as to the intellectual man. The knowledge, indeed, firſt imparted, is that of the ſimple *facts* connected with the perſon and work of "the Lord;" but theſe come inſcribed with intelligible characters that impart the knowledge of *other* truths—of events and declarations infinitely momentous. They ſpeak of the Divine nature and government; the condition of humanity; the evil of ſin; the mode of propitiation; the offer of forgiveneſs, and ſo on: they thus reveal the poſitive promiſe of pardon —the actual readineſs of God to juſtify the guilty, and the ſufficiency of the ground on which it may proceed. Now, juſtifying faith is the reception of *this* teſtimony—this teſtimony of the facts themſelves, as well as of that ſubſtantiating their exiſtence. But, this latter teſtimony all converges to one point, and that is, juſt the gracious declaration of "things that are hoped for." He that receives "the truth," receives the whole impreſſion of the combined evidence of theſe two witneſſes. He admits the ſtatements of the one; he confides in the aſſurances of the other; "peace in believing," is the reſult of the ſentiment, produced and ſuſtained by the union of both. "He that cometh unto God"—cometh as a ſinner—cometh firſt of all for pardon and acceptance—"muſt believe," not only "that he *is*;" ("a thing not ſeen,") but, alſo, that, in the way he hath appointed, "he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him;" ("a thing that is hoped for.")

It is the union of theſe convictions, or, in other words, the poſſeſſion of both the elements of the complex principle, that conſtitutes that faith, which is at once the repoſe of the intel-

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lect and the repoſe of the affections. By this, the mind gazes on the inviſible with perfect perſuaſion—it graſps the promiſe with implicit dependence. It feels aſſured not only that God is, or that God has ſpoken, but that *what* he has ſpoken he is able to perform. It confides in the adequacy of the medium, whoſe intervention affords to God, as a righteous governor, the poſſibility of acting as a compaſſionate prince. It repoſes here. It embraces, pleads, preſents it. It thus directs, ſo to ſpeak, the eye of Deity from the ſinner himſelf, to *Him* in whom he is ever well pleaſed, and in whom therefore is ever beheld a ſufficient reaſon for the exerciſe of mercy. That reaſon prevails. The faith is efficient on account of its object. For the ſake of *that* the man is pardoned, *by means* of "the belief of the truth;"—the reception of it, "not in word, but in power;"—that is, the reception, not merely of the teſtimony, of the letter, revealing "the things not ſeen;" but of the teſtimony of the things themſelves, revealing others "to be hoped for." Thus, by the exerciſe of both the mental emotions involved in the Apoſtle's definition of faith, the ſinner admits the truth involved in his deſcription of the way of ſalvation. "He believes in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt," and,—"he is ſaved."

We have ſpoken, for the ſake of popular apprehenſion, of the faith of the ſinner and the faith of the ſaint; that, by which juſtification is ſecured; and that which produces ſanctified excellence. We have ſpoken as of two faiths of two perſons; but you have ſeen that faith, as to its nature,—as to that which makes it *faith*,—is the ſame in both. In fact, it is one principle and one perſon. The words "ſaint" and "ſinner," deſcribe not two perſons, but *one* viewed under two different aſpects of moral character, or two different moral relations to God. The faith of the ſaint and the faith of the ſinner are not two faiths, but one—one ſpecific principle, conſiſting of the ſame properties, but differing from itſelf in the extent of its obſervation and the quality of its effects. This idea, though in ſubſtance it has already been fully repreſented, you

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muſt permit me, for a moment, more explicitly to expand and illuſtrate.

The religion of the Bible is the religion of a ſinner. The book comes to man firſt of all *as ſuch*. Its *immediate* object is not the regulation of conduct, the formation of character, the production of practical excellence, and ſo on; this, indeed, is its grand and ultimate aim, the end it inceſſantly purſues, and without accompliſhing which it accompliſhes nothing: but, we repeat, its firſt, immediate, direct object, is not this; *that* is the pardon of the guilty, their reconciliation to God,—then comes the regulation of external behaviour, the promotion of that holineſs "which becometh ſaints." Now, both theſe objects are ſecured, inſtrumentally, by the ſame proceſs,—cordial reception of the Divine teſtimony. That teſtimony is univerſally reſolvable, into the atteſtation of matters of fact, with, or containing, the promulgation of matters of promiſe. Every thing addreſſed either to ſaint or ſinner involves theſe; and the cordial reception, by each, of teſtimony ſo ſimilar in its properties, ſuppoſes impreſſions, identical in kind, to be made on both. Firſt of all, in the man as a ſinner, faith, or the reception of the Divine teſtimony, muſt, as we have ſeen, have a regard to all that it is to him, both as to ſubſtance and ſignificancy, fact and aſſurance. It is the appropriate impreſſion of the whole truth upon the whole mind. It includes, therefore, both perſuaſion of the fact and confidence in the promiſe. By ſuch a "belief of the truth" he becomes "an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith." His moral relation to God is changed. Truſting in, and accepted through, "the beloved," he is no longer "a child of wrath," but a pardoned or juſtified perſon. Then, from this point he is to advance; he is now, as a ſaint, to "live" by faith, and "to perfect holineſs in the fear of God." But, however far he may advance as ſuch, *that* faith by which he does ſo, is ſtill ſimply the appropriate impreſſion upon him of the Divine teſtimony,—teſtimony, the objects of which are reſolvable into facts and aſſurances. Still farther.

farther. In each caſe, the effects, though different, are appropriate; and the point and range of obſervation are adapted to the immediate neceſſity. The man's views might at firſt be limited to what directly and eſſentially regarded his actual acceptance: every thing might be contemplated in excluſive relation to that, then, paramount object. But, ſince then, he has both enlarged his ſphere and changed his ground of obſervation. He has added to thoſe firſt and fundamental particulars all that gives fulneſs and proportion to his *knowledge* of the truth; and every thing has ſubſequently been contemplated in direct relation to character and duty. This, however, is juſt the operation of the ſame elements of perſuaſion and confidence in which the reception of the truth primarily conſiſted. The teſtimony as to *its* properties remains the ſame, ſo do the properties of its impreſſion on the mind. Thus faith, the inſtrumental means of pardon to the ſinner, and purity in the ſaint, is *one*, as to its ſpecific characteriſtics, in *both*. Whatever it may effect, immediately or remotely—immediately as to ſtate, remotely as to character—it never is, and never can be, in itſelf, any thing but what the nature of the teſtimony and the nature of man render it at firſt. Whatever it is then, it continues; and whatever it is afterwards, it is then. "Faith," *all* faith, "is the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, *and* the confident expectation of things hoped for."

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THE two faiths, of the ſinner and the ſaint, are thus ſeen, as to their nature, to be reſolvable into one. It is now further to be obſerved, that the two parts of which they, or rather *it*, is ſaid to conſiſt, are alſo reſolvable into one—that is, into the mere belief or reception of teſtimony. We have ſpoken of faith as a principle, as an act or exerciſe of the mind, and ſo on; but in ſtrict accuracy of ſpeech, it is neither more nor leſs than this—the belief of what is teſtified. It is the mind itſelf

receiving

receiving an appropriate impreſſion from what is preſented to it, and it is nothing more. With reſpect to its double aſpect, as defined by the Apoſtle, it may be explained in two ways. *Firſt*, The one may be contemplated as the *effect* of the other, but as ſo neceſſarily an effect, that it is ſpoken of as a part of it, as a conſtituent element, entering into its very eſſence. Hence, what, metaphyſically ſpeaking, ſhould be regarded as the immediate reſult of belief, would, popularly ſpeaking, be ſaid to belong to the nature of the thing. Or, *ſecondly*, it may be put thus. The teſtimony which reveals "a thing not ſeen," is received, if that thing be realized, as a poſitive reality; but the teſtimony which reveals "a thing to be hoped for," is *not* received if that thing be realized only to the ſame extent—only as "a thing not ſeen," and no farther. The *things* are different; they each ſuſtain their reſpective relation towards the mind, and the belief of each is the mind bearing its correſpondent relation towards them. But this is *not* the caſe, if the impreſſion made by both be the ſame. If, however, this impreſſion be different and appropriate, then it *is* the caſe; that is to ſay, the teſtimony, aſſerting the things to be what they are, is really received, becauſe, the "thing hoped for," has a ſentiment aſſociated with it, diſtinct from that aſſociated with the "thing not ſeen." Faith, however, is not, properly ſpeaking, a different act in the two caſes. In both, it is the reception of teſtimony. The difference is not ſo much in the *kind* of reception as in the thing teſtified; not in the mode, but in the objects of belief. We are to look at what is actually preſented to the mind, and we ſhall diſcover, perhaps, that faith, in all caſes, is believing this *to be what it is*.

To this it might be objected, that there are certain minds in the univerſe, who have a perfect perſuaſion not only of the facts, but of the *meaning* of the facts which conſtitute the ſyſtem of mercy, and yet who believe not,—who have no faith. It may be ſaid that angels, both fallen and unfallen, are acquainted not only with the ſubſtance, but with the ſignificancy of

of the plan of ſalvation; that they have an entire conviction of what we ſhould term the things not ſeen; that, moreover, they underſtand all they teach, and have a clear perception of the promiſes they involve, but that, ſtill, they receive no correſpondent impreſſion from theſe, and therefore, that, in conſiſtency with the view given above, it ſhould be denied that they know them *as what they are.*

The objection is more apparent than real. They *do* know them as what they are—promiſes of mercy to man; but this is not what they are to *them;* what they are to them, however, is the teſtimony *they* are to receive; belief is the reception of that teſtimony addreſſed to each claſs of beings reſpectively, and not of that which is addreſſed only to one; this, we have no doubt, they *do* receive; and, therefore, in the proper ſenſe of the word, they have faith—they believe the Goſpel. This belief, too, is capable of being defined in a way which ſhall include what, in one ſenſe, would be called, either the immediate *effect* of belief, or the ſenſitive part of the proceſs, in man; but which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is belief itſelf, for it is the appropriate impreſſion upon the mind of what is actually preſented to it. To ſee this, juſt obſerve what it *is* that is preſented by the Goſpel to three different minds taken from the three claſſes of beings adverted to,—a man, an unfallen, and a fallen intelligence. All look, let us ſay, upon the very ſame tranſactions, and all read the very ſame revelation they involve of the Divine character; but, how different an object is that ſame revelation of the Divine character in relation to each! how different, therefore, the object actually preſented to each, the appropriate impreſſion of which on their ſeparate natures, is to conſtitute, reſpectively, their belief of the Goſpel! To the firſt, or human intelligence, it is the promiſe and proviſion of mercy for *himſelf*, revealing God in ſuch an aſpect as to excite delighted expectation. To the ſecond and third, it is the promiſe and proviſion of mercy for *another*, revealing God in ſuch an aſpect as to excite, in the ſecond, ecſtatic adoration, and, in the

the third, exaſperated terror. Hence, in the man, faith—is the perfect perſuaſion of what is true, and the confident expectation of what is promiſed. In the unfallen intelligence, faith—is the perfect perſuaſion of what is true, and the vivid realization of what is pleaſurable. In the fallen intelligence, faith—is the perfect perſuaſion of what is true, and the vivid realization of what is terrific. All have faith of the ſame kind, becauſe faith, as faith, is, in all intelligent natures, the ſame thing. It is the appropriate impreſſion or reception of teſtimony. But, the teſtimony really addreſſed to each of theſe beings is different; and therefore, juſt *becauſe* faith in itſelf is the ſame thing, is a different impreſſion produced upon each.

But ſometimes, you will ſay, there is a diſtinction ſpoken of between belief and faith. True. And, to ſee whether it can be reconciled to this ſimple view we are now taking of the ſubject, let us look at it. It may be put thus. I believe a *fact*; I have faith in *character*. I call that belief which realizes the exiſtence of a thing; I call that faith, truſt, confidence, which repoſes in the promiſe of an intelligent agent. Or, I believe that which *is*, I believe *in* that which ſays another thing *ſhall be*. If a fact is preſented to me ſimply as ſuch, I believe it; but if it be preſented as a mean to a further end, I exerciſe faith by relying upon it as ſufficient to ſecure that end. All this, however, amounts to nothing more than what we have ſtated faith to be—the appropriate impreſſion on the mind of what is preſented to it. There is here, in each caſe, nothing but the reception of teſtimony; only, there are, ſo to ſpeak, two teſtimonies,—the leſs and the greater, the ſimple and the complex; each produces its correſpondent impreſſion, and if it were not ſo, each would not, properly ſpeaking, be believed. There may be a different feeling in the mind towards a fact, and towards character; or towards a fact regarded ſimply as ſuch, and towards a fact regarded as an inſtrument: but ſtill, this is juſt the mind ſuſtaining its proper relation towards what is teſtified. There is no difference in the nature of our belief

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as the reception of teſtimony, the difference is in the nature of the thing believed.

How is it then, you may further aſk, that a man is often ſaid to believe, and yet not to have faith? How is it that we hear of perſons giving an aſſent to the truth of the Goſpel, and ſyſtematically underſtanding it, and yet, being evidently deſtitute of faith? I ſhould think this language might be called popular, but not preciſe; it is not what we term metaphyſically juſt. To ſay that we may believe without having faith, is to ſay that we may believe without believing, which is abſurd. It is true, the Scriptures themſelves ſpeak of the Goſpel coming in word only, not in power; it is true, they record certain caſes of perſons ſaid to have believed, who, yet, at the ſame time, are repreſented as neither ſaved nor ſanctified, and who, therefore, could not have that faith which is connected either with ſanctity or ſalvation. Still, however, I ſuſpect the explanation is to be found, not in the different nature of the reception, or the different impreſſions, or different feelings, produced by the ſame thing; but, in the different nature of the object contemplated, or the different kind of teſtimony which is actually received. He who receives the Goſpel in word, and he who receives it in power, equally receive an appropriate impreſſion from the object contemplated. Belief, as to its nature, is the ſame in both, but the teſtimony admitted is not. The one believes the propoſition, "the Goſpel is true;" the other believes the propoſitions of the Goſpel itſelf. The one admits the teſtimony of the letter, or of the men who aſſert that ſuch and ſuch facts conſtitute the Goſpel; the other believes the teſtimony of the Spirit, or of God ſpeaking in the facts themſelves. By the one, this latter teſtimony is realized only as a *thing*, not as teſtimony actually addreſſed to him; by the other it *is* thus realized—realized in relation to himſelf—and this changes its nature entirely. Both, therefore, have faith, in the true meaning of the term, as the reception of what is really before the mind; but that which *is* ſo, is infinitely different in each; and

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hence the difference in their character and ſtate. The one does not believe without faith, and the other has belief and faith too: but, the one believes that, which, in itſelf, has no power to ſave or ſanctify; the other believes that which *has* the power and exerts it upon him.

Hence, inſtead of ſaying that there may be belief without faith, it would ſeem to be leſs inaccurate to ſay, that there may be the belief of a certain truth, without being the belief of *the* truth. There may be the impreſſion or reception of a certain teſtimony relative to the Goſpel, without the impreſſion or reception of the Goſpel itſelf. The teſtimony really received, has its proper effect, but it is not *that* teſtimony which ought to be received. Hence, ſuch perſons, properly ſpeaking, have no belief at all. Not becauſe they believe nothing, but becauſe they believe not *that* which God intended they ſhould. Apply this to the ſcriptural inſtances lately alluded to. There are ſome who are ſaid to have "believed" in Chriſt, but to whom he would not commit himſelf, becauſe he knew what was in men. Doubtleſs, they believed ſomething; they believed ſome truth reſpecting him, but they did not believe *the* truth; therefore, they were regarded and treated as not believing at all. So of the Jews, who were repeatedly charged by Jeſus, with not believing Moſes, though, at the very time, they were ſtrenuous in aſſerting the fact of his Divine miſſion, the fact of the truth of his writings, or that "God ſpake by him." Jeſus does not ſay, "you believe, but you have not faith;" but he ſays, "the object of your belief is imperfect,—the teſtimony really addreſſed to you is not received,—you believe that God ſpake by Moſes, but you do not believe *what God ſpake*,—therefore you do not believe at all." There was in theſe perſons an entire abſence of thoſe feelings and ſentiments, which the ſpirit of Moſes' teſtimony, or the teſtimony of the Spirit through him, would have produced, had it been believed; and which, however (in one ſenſe) they might have been repreſented as the *effect* of that belief, would juſt have really conſtituted the belief itſelf, as they would

would have been nothing but the appropriate impreſſion of the teſtimony on the mind. So with reſpect to the brethren of "the rich man." I dare ſay they fully admitted the truth of the propoſition, that "Moſes and the prophets were inſpired perſons, and that their writings contained the ſayings of God." But, this was not receiving the teſtimony of the writings themſelves; and hence, Abraham ſpeaks of them as if they neither believed the prophets nor Moſes. They would have repelled the charge of infidelity; they regarded themſelves, no doubt, as moſt firm and decided believers in Judaiſm; yet they did not believe *that* which would produce penitence and iſſue in pardon, and therefore they did not believe at all. They believed a certain truth, but not *the* truth. Abraham does not ſay they believe but have no faith—they give an intellectual aſſent to the truth, but not a ſenſitive, heartfelt reliance; but he inſinuates that the truth itſelf—the teſtimony, and the object of the teſtimony, which was deſigned to produce a ſpiritual impreſſion, was utterly *dis*believed; ſo that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, what they wanted was a proper object of faith, rather than a proper faith or one of the parts of it.

We are thus brought by a different and, apparently, contradictory courſe of remark, to virtually the ſame concluſion with which we terminated a former ſeries of illuſtrations. "Faith," *all* faith, "is the ſimple reception of teſtimony, *according to its nature.*" According to its nature, it produces, by a neceſſary law, a correſponding impreſſion on the mind. This impreſſion, though ſpoken of as the effect of its reception, or as a ſecond element eſſential to its completeneſs, *is* its reception, for, it is that, which, if not felt, the teſtimony is not received. The Goſpel is the teſtimony of God conveying aſſurances of good through the medium of intelligible facts. Therefore, the impreſſion of that teſtimony, or, the belief or faith of thoſe who receive it, is, "the confident expectation of things hoped for, ariſing from the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen."

Here we ſhall terminate this, I greatly fear, too protracted diſcourſe. It entered into my original deſign, to append to theſe remarks, the exhibition of certain great general concluſions to which they neceſſarily lead, reſpecting the proper evidence of faith—the impoſſibility of juſtification *but* by faith—the nature of hope and aſſurance as implied, in *some* ſenſe, in faith—the neceſſity of our attention being directed to the proper *object* of faith, to truth, to *the* truth, as the only way to receive its correſponding impreſſion, and to enjoy its healing and happy influences: and hence—the reaſonableneſs of ſuſpecting, that, the infelicity, and what is termed the "unbelief," of believers, is owing, in general, to imperfect, obſcure, and perplexed conceptions of truth; or, which is the ſame thing, to their not looking at it, or at what it is to *them*, but either to ſomething which it is *not*, or which is not *truth*. Into theſe, however, and other kindred matters, we cannot at preſent enter. Some of them may, probably, come to be embodied in ſubſequent diſcourſes. But, if not, it is hardly too much to ſay, that you can yourſelves very eaſily purſue the principles we have advanced, in all their bearings, upon theſe topics. In future, we ſhall be principally employed in illuſtrating the practical power of faith, as ſeen in ſpecific inſtances of active or enduring virtue—in individual character and poſitive achievement. The explanation we have attempted of the general ſubject, and of certain terms and phraſes which may frequently occur, will enable you to enter into future illuſtrations, whether the language, in relation to the principle, happen to be the philoſophic or the popular. Brethren, what we have advanced, illuſtrative of this important ſubject, has been, I am ſenſible, feeble and imperfect. But it is that "whereunto I have attained," according to preſent knowledge and judgment, and *more* I could not accompliſh. I think I perceive myſelf the juſtneſs of the poſitions I have been trying to eſtabliſh, but I am not certain that I have ſucceeded in making them quite ſo obvious to you. I deſire to commend both you and myſelf to the

the Divine benediction and the Divine guidance. May that Spirit, who is promiſed to the church, be copiouſly and conſtantly imparted to both, to correct and enlarge our conceptions of his own truth—to beſtow upon us the docility, and to enrich us with the rewards, of the humble diſciple. Impreſſed with the magnitude of the taſk I have undertaken, I would humbly ſolicit your ſupplications on my behalf: and, if it be not improper or preſumptuous, I would deſire now to addreſs the Everlaſting Source of light and wiſdom,—that Being, who himſelf gave his approving teſtimony to the men whoſe characters we are called to contemplate,—and I would addreſs Him in language powerfully expreſſive, at once, of the neceſſities of the preacher and the majeſty of his theme.

"What in me is *dark*,
Illumine; what is *low*, raiſe and ſupport;
That to the height of this great argument
I may aſſert ETERNAL PROVIDENCE,
And juſtify the ways of God to man."

Diſcourſe II.

The Faith of Abel.

HEB. xi. 4.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it, he, being dead, yet ſpeaketh.

WE proceed, my brethren, to the fulfilment of the purpoſe intimated laſt Sabbath, of inviting your attention to a ſeries of diſcourſes on this chapter; diſcourſes, which ſhall exhibit a variety of illuſtrations of the power of that faith, which conſiſts in "the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, the confident expectation of things hoped for." "This is the weapon that overcometh the world." This is the ſource of courage, and the principle of perſeverance. In all ages, and under each diſpenſation, the ſecret has been the ſame, by which holy men have learned to bear calamity without complaint, and to meet temptation with vigorous reſiſtance. In this chapter the Apoſtle has preſented to the contemplation of the church, what he terms a "cloud of witneſſes" to the truth of this remark. The catalogue is embelliſhed by names that will be held in everlaſting remembrance. The ſtudy of it will continue to be, as it has ever been, a ſource at once of courage and conſolation, to ſuch as

are ſtruggling to be followers of them who "through faith and patience are inheriting the promiſes." We propoſe, then, my brethren, to bring before you, in regular ſucceſſion, the principal perſons included in this catalogue; and to notice the events in their hiſtory, and the features of their characters, which tend to illuſtrate the exerciſe of their faith. Before, however, directly proceeding with this deſign, permit me to mention one or two of thoſe conſiderations, which have had the greateſt influence in inducing its formation.

1. The firſt is, that this ſpecies of inſtruction appears eminently adapted to excite intereſt, and ſecure attention. It will be very different from that which it is often our duty to employ. Many of the principles of our faith are inveſted with a myſterious ſublimity, which renders it difficult, if not impoſſible, adequately to apprehend or clearly to deſcribe them. It becomes us, indeed, to bring them before you, although, in doing ſo, we feel like men looking at the ſun. In expounding, alſo, various paſſages of Scripture, we are compelled to proceed through involved proceſſes of thought, which it is not always eaſy to ſimplify. But the expoſition of character—the detail of fact and narrative—the obſervation of Providence—and the practical application of all to our perſonal ſituation—will at once be intereſting to the educated, and eaſy to the unlearned. An intereſt, too, may be created by collateral ſubjects, which the projected courſe will probably embrace; by our glances, for example, at the moral and religious hiſtory of the world;—the hiſtory, in fact, of man as a religious being; the moral viciſſitudes through which he has paſſed, or is paſſing; the knowledge communicated, in different ages, of his ſituation and duty; and the manner in which individuals or ſocieties neglected or improved it. There will be ſomething intereſting, it may reaſonably be preſumed, in theſe and ſimilar topics, ſo neceſſary to juſt conceptions of the ſpecies and the world to which we belong. Between intereſt and improvement there is an unqueſtionable connection;—a connection which, to a certain degree,

degree, cannot be forgotten without folly, and is never *entirely neglected* without guilt.

2. A ſecond inducement may be embodied in the proverbial expreſſion that "example is better than precept." We are more likely to be ſucceſsful in our inculcation of duty, if we not only ſtate what it is right to do, but actually ſhow how it has been done. The mind, in ſuch caſes, ſeems to have the advantage of another ſenſe. It not only hears, but it ſees. The underſtanding is not only put in poſſeſſion of truth, but the fancy is furniſhed with illuſtrations and images. Many a man who could not comprehend the arguments for a particular Providence, can feel the proof, as ſeen in the lives of Abraham or Joſeph. He, whoſe weakneſs would be overcome by temptation or calamity, could he remember nothing but the abſtract precepts of the preacher, may be ſtimulated to exert both firmneſs and faith, by knowing that others have been equally tempted without ſacrificing their virtue, and equally afflicted without loſing their confidence. For this very purpoſe, we imagine, has the Holy Spirit included ſo much of an hiſtorical nature in the inſpired volume. On the ſame account our divine Lord conveyed moſt of his inſtruction in parables, embodying, in the intelligible actions of men, the particular truth he intended to enforce. This was emphatically "teaching the multitude." The maſs of mankind feel, rather than reaſon. They arrive at truth by ſenſation, rather than by argument. The voice of nature from within, reſponds to the impreſſions of nature from without. They cannot go along with you, perhaps, in your demonſtration of a principle; but they *can* comprehend the principle itſelf. They can learn nothing from a laboured diſquiſition on the beauty of virtue; but they can both ſee its beauty and feel its attractions, if preſented before them in action and character. Now, by becoming familiar with the hiſtory of holy men, you will become familiar with the principles of religion itſelf; for it is *theſe*, in fact, you are required to contemplate, embodied in obvious and ſtriking illuſtrations.

3. A third conſideration ariſes from the vaſt importance of the principle for which theſe ancient believers are celebrated. When the ſituation and proſpects of humanity are accurately underſtood, it ceaſes to ſurpriſe us, that the Scriptures ſhould ſpeak ſo ſtrongly of faith. It ceaſes to be wonderful that miniſters ſhould mention it ſo much; we *rather* wonder that they mention it no more. Virtue, properly ſo called, ſeems impoſſible upon any other principle. Virtue,—meaning by the term, moral, reſulting from religious, excellence;—character, internal and external, correſponding with *all* our relations to *all* being. Of many of theſe relations we can know nothing but by teſtimony; the moſt important we are in danger of practically neglecting, unleſs we "ſet" that teſtimony "always before us." In the mind of creatures ſubject to death, religion would ſeem to imply, not only the knowledge of the Divine exiſtence, but the expectation of a future world. But *this* who ſhall *diſcover?* By whoſe penetration ſhall it be certainly aſcertained? Its actual exiſtence,—its ſpecific properties,—its relation to the preſent condition of our being,—the means of making our ſtate in it felicitous, ſhould that not be a neceſſary and univerſal reſult; theſe and other kindred and important particulars, can be ſatisfactorily eſtabliſhed only by teſtimony; and that teſtimony muſt be believed,—firmly, cordially, conſtantly believed; felt, as an ever preſent, and ever preſſing obligation; all its ſubjects ſeen as in vivid reality, and itſelf inveſted with the character of law. Conſidering our nature in its ſublimeſt aſpect—in its moral relations to eternity and God—there is no other conceivable principle by which any thing like excellence can be acquired or maintained. To "live," to "walk," to "fight" "by faith," are thus not more the demands of religion than the requiſitions of philoſophy. From this view of the importance of the principle, as the grand promoter of that virtue which conſiſts in perſevering practical godlineſs,—the only virtue worthy the purſuit of immortal natures,—we ſee a reaſon ſufficiently powerful to prompt the proſecution of our preſent purpoſe.

4. Laſtly,

4. Laſtly, other inducements ariſe from the variety of circumſtance which the lives of ſo many perſons neceſſarily include; hence, the different aſpects and operations which this will preſent to us, of the general principle common to them all. Here are perſons of different profeſſions and purſuits—of all orders of ſociety—of various ages—and many the ſubjects of ſingular viciſſitude. There are few temptations to crime—few opportunities for ſplendid virtue—few calamities to which we are expoſed—and few ways in which life can terminate—but what may be paralleled in the hiſtory and death of theſe extraordinary men. There can be none, therefore, in however large or mixed a congregation, but may here find ſomething directly adapted to their character and ſtate. Whatever be the particular form which the common depravity may, in any of you, aſſume; whatever the kind of temptation moſt habitual or virulent; whatever the arduouſneſs of the labour which Providence impoſes—or the gloom of the way in which you are to walk—or even the ſoftneſſes by which you are in danger of being lulled into ſecurity;—here, in the hiſtory of men "of like paſſions with yourſelves," who inherited the ſame nature and ſerved the ſame God, you will find ſomething written as if expreſſly for "*your* learning," that *you*, "through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope." This proſpect of contributing, in ſome meaſure, to the benefit of all, by one or other of the names to which we muſt refer, as it is the great end of pulpit inſtruction in general, ſo it is the greateſt inducement to that particular mode of it, which, for a ſeaſon, we deſign to adopt.

2.

THE firſt name is that of Abel. He is contraſted with his brother, who has acquired, in the hiſtory of the ſpecies, unenviable diſtinction. "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs that he*

was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it, he, being dead, yet ſpeaketh."

We ſhall endeavour, in the firſt place, to explain in what Abel's faith conſiſted, and how it was expreſſed; adverting, of courſe, to the inferiority aſcribed both to Cain and his offering. We ſhall then found upon the facts of the hiſtory ſuch general reflections as they may ſeem naturally to ſuggeſt.

"By faith," ſays the Apoſtle, in the preceding verſe, "we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." That is to ſay, by receiving the Divine Record as infallibly true, we arrive at the knowledge of a fact, which we could not, with ſuch abſolute certainty, have known without it. We know that this great and ſplendid univerſe was brought into exiſtence by the *fiat* of that Being whom we denominate God: that Being who *was*, before any part of ſpace glowed with the effulgence of ſuns and of ſyſtems; and who *will be*, after the glory of them all ſhall have paſſed away. By faith we believe what he has ſaid reſpecting the abſolute nature of the act of creation; we believe "that the things which are ſeen were not made of things which do appear;" that he not only operated on pre-exiſting materials, but that he called from nothing theſe materials themſelves, giving them being, as well as form and order. From the ſame authority upon which we receive this fact, we receive other facts, connected not only with the creation of the world, but with the hiſtory of man. Theſe facts we never could have known unleſs they had been told us. We may conſtruct a ſyſtem of opinions by the independent exertion of our own minds; we may reaſon upon appearances and arrive at concluſions, without being indebted to foreign aſſiſtance; but, by *reaſoning* we never could diſcover paſt facts; in this way no man could ever write a hiſtory; he who profeſſes to inform us of what formerly occurred, muſt tell us either what he has heard, or what he has ſeen, but he muſt not tell us merely what he thinks. Applying theſe intuitive and unqueſtionable principles to the preſent ſubject, we obſerve, that,

that, though we may reaſon, and reaſon plauſibly, reſpecting the manner of the creation of the world, or the original circumſtances and condition of mankind; yet, it is utterly impoſſible in this way to diſcover anything reſpecting the *facts*. For the facts, we muſt neceſſarily be indebted to foreign information. This information we have in the Bible. Limited as it is, we are content to receive it not only as the moſt probable, but actually as the true interpretation of all natural and moral appearances. At times, perhaps, we may wiſh it had been more circumſtantial or more extended; we may think it would have gratified us to have known ſomething more ſpecific of the capacities and character of the firſt man: but, whatever we may wiſh, we have no right either to reject or to alter what *is* written reſpecting him; to call that a figure which the hiſtorian gives as a fact; or to receive with heſitation the little that is ſaid, becauſe we cannot obtain all we ſhould like. By faith, then, in the word of God, we believe, that, after he had finiſhed the erection and embelliſhment of the material world—after he had combined its elements and fixed its proportions—after he had ſeparated the earth and ſea—after he had covered one with the luxuriance of vegetable nature, and filled both with varieties of ſenſitive exiſtence—after he had repleniſhed every part of his domain with forms of beauty, and ſurveyed the whole with complacent ſatisfaction,—we believe, that he created a being to be "lord of all;" one, who repreſented upon earth the moral majeſty of his own nature; who was diſtinguiſhed by intelligence, and deſigned for virtue: but, who was to be tried by a teſt at once ſimple and ſufficient; by which trial, he was to undergo a proof as to the ſtrength of his principle—to afford a pledge of ſubſequent obedience—to ſecure the perpetuity of his primeval advantages, or, by contracting guilt, to forfeit them for ever!

On the ſame authority that we believe Adam was tried, we believe that he fell; that he ſubmitted to the firſt temptation; that, in conſequence of this, inſtead of remaining immortal, he became

became ſubject to death; inſtead of advancing, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe he would have done, from "glory to glory," he loſt the moral luſtre with which he was originally inveſted; his heart became the ſeat of turbulent paſſions,—his intellect of error,—his mind of remorſe. A cataſtrophe occurred in which all nature ſympathized, and in the effects of which his poſterity were involved. A poiſon was infuſed into our moral conſtitution, which ſtill continues to corrupt it; the diſaſtrous conſequences of which were dreadfully diſplayed in the very firſt child that ſprung from the primitive tranſgreſſor. The heavens, we are informed, were ſhrouded in ſackcloth when the Saviour of men ſuffered; the ſun ſhrunk from the ſpectacle of innocence in agony; he could not look upon the act by which man filled up the meaſure of his guilt. We can almoſt imagine that ſimilar prodigies accompanied the commencement of man's diſobedience; that the ſame ſun expreſſed his abhorrence of the crime, by eclipſing his ſplendour and withdrawing from the ſight; that with reluctance he returned back again to illuminate a fallen world,—a world which his beams could never reach without contact with pollution,—where his light would be given to lead man to the grave, to ſhow him his miſery, and to ſhine upon his aſhes.

By the circumſtance of the apoſtacy, the religion of the ſpecies was entirely changed. While in Paradiſe, it was the direct and ſimple effuſion of gratitude, ariſing from the boſom of innocent intelligence. It was the inſtinctive exertion of unimpaired intellect, and the ſpontaneous effort of holy feeling, employed in the contemplation and devoted to the ſervice of the Supreme Nature. There was no barrier then between earth and heaven. There was no interpoſing obſtruction between man and God. There was no darkneſs inveſting the Divinity, to excite in his creatures perplexity and terror. *He* could feel no fear whoſe boſom was burdened with no guilt. And while God ſaw upon his works the ſame lovelineſs as when he pronounced them "good," he had no reaſon to withdraw his

his complacency, or to retire into the depths of his everlaſting dwelling-place. As ſoon, however, as humanity had ſinned, and the ratification of its puniſhment was pronounced, this ſeems to have been demanded by the majeſty of the Eternal. He eſtabliſhed, indeed, a covenant of grace, but then he withdrew in a manner from the ſcene of pollution, and encloſed himſelf within the precincts of that unſeen world, "where nothing that defileth" is permitted to approach. It comported not with the dignity of the Supreme, to maintain as before familiar intercourſe, or even to treat *directly* with the apoſtate. Henceforth, he was commanded to come with the ſignificant expreſſions of extrinſic dependence. His religion became completely altered from what it was at firſt. It conſiſted of other acts and other feelings. Inſtead of being nothing more than the ſimple gratitude of innocence, and the glowing adoration of virtue, it was the ſervice of a creature conſcious of crime, expoſed to puniſhment, pleading for forgiveneſs, confiding in mercy, and ſaved by mediation.

Theſe general remarks will enable us to underſtand the different character of the two perſons who are this morning introduced to our attention;—perſons, who might almoſt be deſcribed as the firſt martyr and the firſt infidel. "Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain;" and he did this, it is ſaid, "by faith." There was ſomething more in his ſacrifice, and ſomething more in himſelf, which ſecured the gracious acceptance of his perſon and worſhip. The want of theſe in his brother's occaſioned his rejection. The only explanation that can be given of this ſubject, conſiſtently with enlightened reaſon, may be comprehended in the following obſervations, in which we ſhall remark, *firſt*, that there was a difference in the *ſacrifices*, and, *ſecondly*, a difference in the *ſentiments*, of the two worſhippers.

1. "Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice." Or ſimply, "more ſacrifice,"—or a "fuller," a "more complete ſacrifice." It is ſuppoſed to refer not only to intrinſic excellence,

lence, but to quantity and number. In conſiſtency with this, the original hiſtory might be paraphraſed in this way,—"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; and Abel—he did the ſame,—*he* brought of the fruit of the ground; but he did more than this, he *alſo* brought of the firſtlings of his flock." The word "alſo" being conceived to ſignify "in addition," and not merely "in like manner." Both preſented a meat or thank offering; but one of them preſented a ſin offering beſides. Both preſented an "offering," but not a "ſacrifice;" for, properly ſpeaking, the fruits of the earth were not ſuch;—they were not a victim, not a thing *ſlain*. This, however, was *added* by Abel, and hence the greater completeneſs of *his* preſentation.

But, ſuppoſing that the "offering" be regarded as *involved* in the "firſtling" of Abel, it ſtill remains to be accounted for, how he came to preſent a "ſacrifice" at all. Does it ſeem to you a natural ſuggeſtion for man to come to God by an act of cruelty and blood?—by the infliction of pain and the extinction of enjoyment? Do you think it probable, that Abel, of his own accord, would have conceived the idea of inflicting death as an acceptable ſervice to that very Being who had ſeemed ſo anxious to exclude death from his dominions? I ſhould think not. Indeed, we cannot ſuppoſe that God would leave ſuch a matter as the way in which he would be worſhipped, to be determined by an ignorant and erring worſhipper. It ſeems by far the moſt rational ſuppoſition, that we have here a proof of the Divine appointment of ſacrifice. And if ſacrifice was divinely appointed, then it was appointed for man *as man*—that is, for *all* men, whatever their occupation or purſuits; not merely for keepers of ſheep, but for tillers of the ground; for men as *ſinners*, altogether irreſpective of profeſſional diſtinctions. The inſtitution had an equal reference to the condition of the ſpecies and the "Lamb of God;" to him, who, though he did not appear till the "fulneſs of time," was thus virtually "ſlain from the foundation of the world." "Without ſhedding of blood

blood there is no remiſſion." There never has been, and there never could be. The whole of both Covenants goes to corroborate and confirm the aſſertion. "It *became* God, in bringing ſons unto glory, to make the Captain of ſalvation perfect through ſufferings." "It *behoved* Chriſt to ſuffer." "If Law *could* have given life, verily righteouſneſs would have been by Law." There was a myſterious and invincible neceſſity for ſome other proceſs. This neceſſity, and the nature of the proceſs, were both embodied in the ſacrificial appointment. This, therefore, it became man moſt ſcrupulouſly to regard. There could be no acceptable approach to Deity without it. But it was *without* this that Cain came. He deſpiſed or neglected that, the want of which rendered his offering eſſentially defective. Abel, however, *did* regard it. He obeyed the *whole* of the Divine intimations, and therefore he preſented a more excellent—or more complete—ſacrifice than Cain.

2. But further. There was not only this difference in the ſacrifices,—there was a difference in the *men*. This difference, in fact, is indicated by the matter of their offering. In Cain's "fruits of the earth" there was an acknowledgment of dependence; there was an expreſſion of gratitude; there was a recognition of the exiſtence of God—a confeſſion that he ought to be worſhipped—and that worſhip ſhould conſiſt of thankfulneſs and praiſe. But this is not enough. It is not enough for man as a ſinner. It might do for Paradiſe. All this might have been felt and performed by Adam in his primeval circumſtances, and *then* it might have ſufficed. But it will not do now. The apoſtacy has occaſioned an immenſe difference in our ſtate, and requires a correſponding difference in our religion. *This*, for any thing we can tell, *may* be the worſhip of other worlds, whoſe inhabitants retain their innocence, and whoſe faith, therefore, may conſiſt of fewer points and ſimpler elements; but it cannot be the worſhip of *this* world, which demands, as eſſential to acceptance, the penitent acknowledgment of our ſinful ſtate, and the unequivocal expreſſion of dependence on a Mediator.

Mediator. Theſe were the feelings, and this was the faith, of Abel. He received the ſeveral communications which it became the duty of his parent to impart. Adam would have the humiliating office of informing his ſons of the apoſtacy; the melancholy taſk of interpreting certain appearances, or replying to certain queſtions, by referring to the fact of his own guilt. But, in connection with this, he would have to ſpeak of the Divine mercy, and of the peculiar mode in which it was to be ſought. Along with "the things not ſeen," of the exiſtence or occurrence of which he could give them indubitable proof, he would have to tell of the myſterious intimation of a great Deliverer,—the promiſe and the pledge of "things to be hoped for." From all this the mind of Abel received a correſponding impreſſion. Part was corroborated by perſonal conſciouſneſs; part was an economy ſuited to his ſtate. We cannot conſider that he had anything like clear conceptions reſpecting the Meſſiah; but we doubt not, that, in offering a ſacrifice of blood, he would feel it to be demanded for ſome important reaſon, and would endeavour to aſcertain its ſpiritual ſignificance. What was his reward, who ſhall ſay? Thus far we may obviouſly advance,—that he learned to acknowledge the deſert of tranſgreſſion; confeſſed at the altar his perſonal unworthineſs; and hoped that the appointed offering, if it did not itſelf, indicated what *could* remove the penalty from guilt. He unqueſtionably felt the neceſſity of pardon; and he expected it in that way in which God appeared to ſignify it was poſſible to be obtained, and appeared to reveal himſelf as willing to impart it. This was faith. He received, in a manner conſiſtent with the infancy of the church, the teſtimony of the facts of the firſt diſpenſation. But in all this the mind of his brother held no ſympathy with his. He neglected the Divine direction; he virtually denied the truths it involved: he manifeſted no repentance; he ſought no mercy; he recognized no Mediator. Inſtead of a humble and chaſtened confidence, ariſing from the promiſe of pardon, and expreſſed in the obedience of faith, he

ſeemed

ſeemed to approach God in a ſpirit of ſelf-righteous and impious preſumption. His ſacrifice itſelf was imperfect; the ſentiments with which it was attended were poſitive ſins. They were flagrantly inconſiſtent with his actual ſituation. They were more ſuited to the child of innocence than the ſubject of guilt. They were ſuch as in an angel would have been the natural conſequence of its unſullied virtue; but which, in the inhabitant of a fallen world, combined the moſt lamentable ignorance with the moſt unpardonable pride; and hence, inſtead of recommending his worſhip or improving his character, they only inveſted both with the ſhades of a darker and deadlier criminality.

Such ſeems to have been the difference between the two ſons of our remoteſt anceſtor, in the principles of their cha racter and the nature of their worſhip. There was alſo a difference proportionally great in the expreſſion towards them of the Divine regard. And there is ſtill a difference in the moral inſtruction which their conduct reſpectively conveys to the church. Theſe additional ideas, upon which we ſhall not dwell farther than to ſtate them, are ſuggeſted by the other clauſes of the text. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable ſacrifice than Cain, *by which he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it, he, being dead, yet ſpeaketh.*"

In what manner God "teſtified" his acceptance of Abel's worſhip, as it is not expreſſly ſtated either by Moſes or Paul, it is not for us poſitively to affirm. We are not without means, however, of coming to a very probable opinion reſpecting it. Moſes ſays, "that God had reſpect unto Abel, and to his offering," and that, in conſequence of this, "Cain was wroth." The language appears to indicate, that either ſome audible or viſible token of acceptance was employed; otherwiſe, the malignity of Cain could not have been arouſed. When we remember, however, that, in after times, God was accuſtomed to expreſs his complacency by conſuming the offering with fire from heaven, it will appear, perhaps, moſt likely that *this* was the

the way in which he conveyed his ſatisfaction at firſt.—In conſequence of this ſacrifice being preſented "by faith," that is, with a perfect perſuaſion, that what God had preſcribed as the medium of mercy, would be an adequate ſecurity to a penitent man, Abel was accounted a "righteous" or juſtified perſon;—righteous, not as inherently ſo, but contemplated as ſuch in the eye of the Sovereign, in conſequence of his ſimple dependence on the Divine appointment, which had a direct relation to the merit of Meſſiah. He is the firſt ſinner recorded in Scripture as partaking of the "righteouſneſs of faith." In conſequence of this, he ſeems to have obtained the epithet "righteous," as his peculiar diſtinction, for our Lord employs it reſpecting him, in a manner indicative of its proverbial uſe. Thus is Abel, though dead, yet ſpoken of, and held in remembrance by the church; or rather, thus, though dead, he ſtill ſpeaketh; he ſtill ſpeaketh both by his ſacrifice and his faith, teaching that penitence, humility, obedience, and truſt, which the doctrine involved in his offering is adapted to produce, and which, in his own character, were ſo eminently exemplified.

Many important reflections might be founded upon the various facts of the hiſtory before us. We need not conceal that we had once intended to ſuggeſt ſeveral. It appears, however, better to confine our attention to *two*, which are intimately connected with that ſpecific ſubject, which it is the immediate object of these lectures to illuſtrate.

1. We obſerve, in the firſt place, that, from the moment of the fall, and under all diſpenſations, the medium of mercy has been the ſame. As ſoon as man became a ſinner, he ſtood in need of a pardon; pardon has been granted in every age upon the ſame conſideration; that conſideration, whatever it be, (it is not our object at preſent to inquire,) which appears to the Divine mind, on contemplating Chriſt's crucified humanity. The *knowledge* of this has, in different periods, been different, according as the inſtitutions of worſhip and the rays of revelation

lation were more or leſs ſignificant and luminous. There has been this difference with reſpect to men, but there has been none with reſpect to God. It was the ſeed of the woman that bruiſed the head of the ſerpent beneath the feet of the antediluvian believers, as well as beneath the feet of the recipients of the Goſpel revelation. The aſpect of the atonement with relation to God, conſidered as a mediatorial tranſaction, has been invariably the ſame; with relation to the church, it has aſſumed or preſented different degrees of clearneſs, in proportion to the diſtinctneſs with which it has been revealed. Its conception, that is to ſay, by the human mind, was a doctrine gradually apprehended: in itſelf, or in the view of the Divine mind, it was virtually an eternal and unchangeable fact. Were it not ſo, the *whole* church could not—and yet we know that every redeemed ſpirit from Abel himſelf *will*—join, with perfect ſatisfaction, in the ſong of the Apocalypſe, "Worthy is the Lamb, to receive honour, and glory, and bleſſing, *for* he was ſlain for us."

2. In the ſecond place. It is poſſible to chooſe a religion from pride, which ſhall expoſe the profeſſor to condemnation. The principles and requiſitions of the Goſpel are unqueſtionably oppoſed to the ſelf-ſufficiency of the natural mind. It is humbling, after all we may have acquired of character among men, to have to come to God with a confeſſion of deſtitution and depravity. It is humbling to have to acknowledge that there is nothing in ourſelves on which we can ſubſtantiate a claim to acquittal or to recompence. It is humbling to have to ſue for mercy, and to be compelled to receive it only in conſideration of another's worth. It is humbling to have to ſubmit to be conducted into the preſence of the Supreme, like an utterly polluted and loathſome thing, on which the eye of Deity can never dwell with ſatisfaction except through the purifying medium provided by himſelf. All this is humbling; it is repugnant to the pride and arrogancy of man's heart; and rather than believe it can be neceſſary, he will often pleaſe

himſelf

himſelf with forms and ſyſtems dreadfully deluſive—more flattering but leſs ſafe. There is ſomething gratifying in the idea of coming to God like Cain, with a ſimple acknowledgment of his exiſtence and his bounty. There is ſomething ſublime in the thought of thus approaching the eternal and infinite Spirit; claiming to be a part of his offspring, and going forth in high and delightful excurſions on the grandeur of his nature, and the extent of his works. There is ſomething in all this that juſt ſuits the loftineſs of the being that feels his conſcious immortality, and exults in his capacities of action and happineſs. There is nothing here to humble and to awe. It may all be enjoyed by a mind profoundly careleſs of its moral ſituation. It is gratifying to intellect, and captivating to genius. It can be ſung in poetry and embelliſhed by taſte. And yet, it is nothing but a particular form of the great principle of pride; nothing but a certain kind of the idolatry of nature. It may conſiſt with, and will encourage, in fact, ſome of the worſt paſſions of the heart,—an utter repugnance to God's method of ſalvation, and a contemptuous oppoſition to thoſe that receive it.

To conclude. Let us examine, my brethren, into our poſſeſſion of that principle, the importance of which is obviouſly eſtabliſhed by God's gracious acceptance of this primitive ſaint. What he faintly perceived, we are permitted fully to comprehend. He addreſſes us now by his faith. Could he ſpeak to us audibly from heaven, it would be to aſk, "If he received the teſtimony of God when ſo imperfectly communicated; how much more ſhould we, who enjoy the meridian light of his full revelation?" Let us remember, that there is "the blood of ſprinkling which ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel." The one cried for vengeance on the head of the murderer; the other ſolicits and ſecures mercy for us all. *This* has a voice that both reaches the ear, and penetrates the heart, of offended Deity. "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt, his Son, cleanſeth from all ſin." He ſtoops in conſequence "to beſeech

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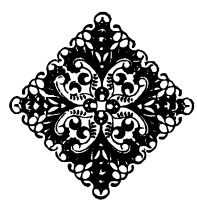
us to come and be reconciled to himſelf." Let us willingly obey the Divine invitation. Let us draw near to God "with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith;"—in dependence on the ſacrifice which he himſelf has preſcribed;—through which we may certainly be accepted;—"obtain witneſs that we are righteous,"—"receiving the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace."



Diſcourſe iii.

The Character of Enoch.

HEB. xi. 5.

By faith Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his translation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.

THE ſecond name in this catalogue of the illuſtrious dead,—or rather, to ſpeak more in accordance with the character in queſtion, the illuſtrious *departed*,—is that of Enoch; a man whoſe eminent piety and glorious tranſlation are this morning to become the ſource of our inſtruction and appeal. We were occupied laſt Sabbath by conſidering the faith of one of God's earlieſt worſhippers; and we ſaw it manifeſted by a ſcrupulous attention to His immediate ſervice: and we now advert to the ſame principle, but we are to ſee it diſplayed in a more extended ſphere; to obſerve it prompting to other and diverſified duties; and rewarded, at laſt, by the ſudden and miraculous removal of its poſſeſſor from the earth.

In glancing at the firſt two names which occur in this

catalogue of faithful men, and in indulging the aſſociations with which they are connected, there are two ſentiments ſtrongly ſuggeſted to the mind, which we ſhall here embody as introductory remarks.

In the *firſt* place. The mention of Abel leads us naturally to inquire after the character of Adam: here is no mention of *his* faith, who, having taught his children to ſin, ought to have taught them alſo how to believe and to repent. *He* ſtands not at the head of this cloud of witneſſes, who, we ſhould have expected, would have become as diſtinguiſhed for the elevation of his piety, as he once was for his dreadful diſobedience. It were natural to ſuppoſe that he ſhould have been exhibited as an inſtructive example of penitence and faith, leading us back again to that Being whom he too ſucceſsfully taught us to forſake. But this is not the caſe. The Holy Spirit, in none of his communications, has recorded any thing of the faith of Adam. However reſolute and invincible it may ultimately have become; however nobly it may have led him to act when ſurrounded by ſubſequent temptations; and however brightly it may have illuminated his departing hour, when he came to taſte the bitterneſs of that death, which he himſelf had introduced into the world; however, we repeat, the faith of Adam may have been diſtinguiſhed by ſuch "infallible proofs," the Scriptures maintain a ſolemn and fearful ſilence on the ſubject. They attach no worth,—they attribute no greatneſs,—to the character of the primitive apoſtate; they never hold *him* forth to the admiration of his offspring, to kindle in them the flame of devotion or the purpoſes of virtue. They ſay nothing, indeed, of his utter and hopeleſs impenitence, and therefore they allow us to believe that he was recovered and reſtored; but, by paſſing him over in this roll and record of the good, where one of his immediate deſcendants finds ſuch an honourable place, they ſeem to mark his preſumption and to commemorate his guilt. There is an audible and an eloquent voice in this very ſilence of Scripture. We are taught by it both the diſpleaſure

diſpleaſure of Jehovah againſt ſin, and that to the ſecond Adam, rather than to the firſt, we are to look for the means and the motives of repoſſeſſing our primitive pre-eminence.

In the *ſecond* place. We obſerve and are affected by the *contraſt* between the fate of Abel and Enoch. The one was cruſhed to the earth by the hand of a brutal and ferocious murderer; the other was conveyed to heaven, moſt likely by the "miniſtry" of ſome benevolent intelligence. The one met death in its moſt repulſive form, and will probably be the longeſt tenant of the ſepulchre; the other entirely eſcaped it, and was the firſt to poſſeſs the happineſs of perfect and immortal humanity. There is ſomething inſtructive, in theſe characters being placed ſide by ſide on the page of revelation. The ſtrong contraſt they form ſtrikes the mind as ſomething remarkable. It ſeems to furniſh an illuſtration of the myſterious diverſities of fact and circumſtance, which are perpetually occurring in the moral government of God. When we ſee righteous Abel falling beneath the ſtroke of inhumanity and violence, we are ready to fear that God hath forſaken the earth. While our feelings are yet occupied with the painful apprehenſion, another and an oppoſite picture paſſes before us, exciting another and an oppoſite train of emotion. We are called to lift our eyes from the blood of the firſt martyr, and to behold a member of that very ſpecies upon which the ſentence of death has been pronounced, eſcaping from this guilty world, without experiencing for a moment a pang of its bitterneſs; and we are as much aſtoniſhed by the extraordinary interference of God in this inſtance, as we were confounded by the palpable want of it in the other; and we are taught, how cautiouſly it becomes us to pronounce on the character of Deity and the purpoſes of Providence, from ſingle inſtances and iſolated facts; how perfectly we may ſuppoſe harmony is preſerved in the great whole, however inexplicable to us are particular appearances; and that, in the end, when we attain to that world where we ſhall no longer "ſee but in part," we may expect God to prove his own

interpreter,

interpreter,—to develop to his people the hidden reaſons and the relative conſiſtency of thoſe events in his government which, at preſent, are as myſterious in their occurrence, as the apparent abandonment of diſtinguiſhed faith, or the bodily tranſlation of imperfect virtue.

From this preliminary remark, we paſs on to the more immediate ſubject of diſcourſe. We are to exhibit to you the faith of Enoch. We ſhall conſider, firſt, his life; and, ſecondly, his tranſlation; as, reſpectively, its proof and its reward.

Our attention is firſt to be directed to the holy life of this diſtinguiſhed patriarch. It is referred to both by Moſes and Paul. In the book "Geneſis" it is deſcribed by a figurative expreſſion of great and emphatic ſignificancy—"*Enoch walked with God;*" and this, you may remember, is the firſt break which the hiſtorian makes upon his melancholy and monotonous account of the lineal deſcendants of Adam. He commences with our remoteſt progenitor, and advances through ſeven generations without once varying his language, or introducing an additional idea; he merely ſtates, reſpecting each individual, that he was born—begat ſons and daughters—and died; and thus he proceeds, without the leaſt intimation of moral hiſtory or religious attainment, until he touches upon the name of this venerable man; then, for the firſt time, he interrupts the dry uniformity of his narrative, and, in one ſhort ſentence, pours ſuch a flood of glory upon the memory of Enoch, as has rendered his character illuſtrious in every age of the church. And it may be worthy obſervation, that in the few lines allotted to him in the annals of Moſes, the ſtatement that he "walked with God" is twice made, as if to impreſs us with the ſingularity and the importance of the fact. In the text, Paul tells us, that, before his tranſlation, Enoch had this teſtimony, "that he pleaſed God;" an expreſſion deſigned, I imagine, to be equivalent to the one we have juſt noticed. "Enoch *pleaſed* God." *How* he did this,—what was

was the *principle* which ſecured ſo tranſcendant an object,—the Apoſtle has himſelf informed us, by intimating that his conduct was the reſult, and his tranſlation the reward, of that faith "without which it is *impoſſible* to pleaſe Him."

It may be remarked, in general, that theſe brief but ſtriking expreſſions of the ſacred penman relative to Enoch, are calculated to afford us the higheſt idea of his character and faith. He was, of courſe, a man of like paſſions with others; inheriting that nature to which the purſuit of excellence is ſo onerous and difficult; he was doubtleſs placed in circumſtances where he was frequently proved; example, and opportunity, and appetite, might concur to ſeduce or to ſurpriſe him;—yet we have no fact, no inſinuation, againſt his perfect and uniform propriety. Many of the worthies of ancient time were men of diſtinguiſhed faith and unqueſtionable character; but there were periods in the hiſtory of *ſome* of them, when they fell into the moſt flagrant violations of virtue,—when they abandoned their expectations of future reward for the poſſeſſion of immediate indulgence,—ſacrificed their faith at the ſolicitation of their ſenſes,—and thus ſtained their memory with the dark ſhadow of their infamous irregularities. Nothing of this nature is recorded of Enoch; partly, perhaps, from the narrow limits within which his hiſtory is confined; but principally, I imagine, from the extreme circumſpection and purity of his life. His failings, whatever they were, excited no triumph in the enemies of truth,—they gave no occaſion to the adverſary to blaſpheme,—they are not deſerving the ſlighteſt hint in the record of his character:—he ſtands illuſtrious and alone; enſhrined, as it were, in the great temple of Truth and Purity; of mere men, the moſt ſimilar to Him, "who was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners." I conceive him to have been diſtinguiſhed, in an eminent degree, by the principles and fruits of that holineſs, which was never ſeen in perfection but when infinite excellence appeared in the perſon of Chriſt. Some of thoſe rays of glory which were then concentrated and combined,

bined, ſeem to have been firſt reflected by the patriarch, and to have rendered him an expreſſive type of the Meſſiah; and, as *He* "aſcended up on high, leading captivity captive," ſo did *Enoch* aſcend, eſcaping the power of death, and becoming, by inſtantaneous transformation, perfect and immortal.

In attempting a more particular illuſtration of the character of Enoch, we ſhall endeavour briefly to enumerate the moſt important ideas that ſeem to be included in the phraſe "walking with God."

1. Divine revelation has itſelf aſſerted that "two cannot walk together unleſs they are agreed,"—unleſs there be a perfect underſtanding and a mutual confidence between them; and hence, the *firſt* thought which Enoch's character ſuggeſts, is that of the moral harmony ſubſiſting between him and Deity, as the implied and neceſſary baſis of their intercourſe. So long as enmity exiſts between any individuals, there exiſts an invincible barrier to cordial correſpondence. If perſons ſo ſituated are compelled to meet, it will be with reluctance;—if they have to mingle together in ſociety, it will be with internal diſguſt;—the hour that commands their contact will be dreaded when diſtant, and hated when it comes;—and the moment that terminates their unnatural communion will be hailed as the harbinger of freedom and relief. In ſuch a caſe, there never can be that warm and welcome ſalutation that attends the meeting of thoſe, whoſe minds are cemented by affectionate eſteem;—there can be nothing like "*walking together*,"—nothing like that unſuſpecting and perfect confidence which ſuch a habit of intercourſe implies. If, therefore, Enoch "walked with God," the fact ſtrongly ſuggeſts that no enmity exiſted to obſtruct their communion;—that, if any *had* exiſted, it was entirely removed, and had given place to other ſentiments in the boſom of each,—to confidence on the part of Enoch, and to complacency on the part of God.

And ſuch previous enmity there was; for "the natural man is enmity againſt God;" and Enoch, however eminent he may ſtand

ſtand in the records of the church, was once, unqueſtionably, the ſubject of that alienation of feeling and deſire from the holineſs in which Deity delights, that conſtitutes the univerſal proof of the apoſtacy; and, therefore, before he could "walk with God," it was neceſſary that he ſhould be "at peace with him," by the removal of thoſe obſtacles which ſin and depravity interpoſed. *How* theſe were removed, we may conjecture, by obſerving the nature of the Patriarchal Diſpenſation, and its ſubſtantial connection with the Evangelical Economy. For this we have adequate aſſiſtance in the caſe of Abel, whoſe faith is repreſented as diſplayed by the peculiar properties of his ſacrifice. It is impoſſible to account for the early exiſtence of animal ſacrifice, on any principle but that of the Divine appointment, the idea is ſo foreign from what we ſhould expect as the ſpontaneous ſuggeſtion of nature. It is ſo myſterious, however, as the requiſition of infinite benignity, that, admitting ſuch appointment, it ſeems but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, it muſt have been preſcribed for ſome great and peculiar purpoſe; and that purpoſe, there can now be no queſtion, from the ſubſequent diſcoveries of mercy, was, to prefigure the death and paſſion of the promiſed Meſſiah, and to intimate to the worſhipper, in ſome faint degree, both the deſert of ſin and the medium of forgiveneſs. Preſuming that ſuch was its origin and deſign, it is eaſy to perceive in what way that friendſhip was primarily eſtabliſhed, to which we are at preſent referring, as the very baſis of Enoch's intercourſe with God. There *was* originally an obſtacle between the parties in queſtion;—there was a barrier that prevented ſpontaneous and natural harmony;—the moral union between earth and heaven had been broken,—and before God could repoſe in man, or man walk with God, as he had formerly done in Paradiſe, it was neceſſary for this union to be reſtored, by the acquieſcence of both minds in ſome ſuitable expedient. He who had been offended, had a right to preſcribe what he pleaſed; or, if he pleaſed, even to withhold ſuch interpoſition

altogether.

altogether. It *did* pleaſe him, however, in his infinite compaſſion, to cheriſh purpoſes of mercy;—and, previous to the "fulneſs of time," when theſe were to be accompliſhed, to appoint a ſacrifice of blood, as the ſignificant method of penitential approach, and the excluſive means of reconciliation. The rejection of Cain and his offering proceeded, as we have ſeen, as much from the deficiency of the ſacrifice, as the unworthineſs of the worſhipper; indeed, the deficiency was a proof of the unworthineſs, as it indicated a ſtate of mind altogether inconſiſtent with his ſinful ſituation. With ſuch views of this divinely preſcribed and excluſively efficient mode of approach to offended Deity,—the mode which repreſents the Meſſiah "as the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world,"—the mode by which man, immediately ſubſequent to the fall, was required "to acquaint himſelf with God and be at peace;"—with ſuch views, we cannot but refer to the ſacrifice and the altar, to account for the harmony which ſubſiſted between Jehovah and Enoch. It was *here* that the patriarch, bending beneath the conſciouſneſs of depravity and guilt, learned to indulge hope and to ſubdue apprehenſion.—It was here he diſcovered, that, by ſimple ſubmiſſion to the Supreme will, and affectionate dependence on the Supreme aſſurances, "he might have his *delight* in the Almighty, and could lift up his face unto God."—It was here that "reconciliation" was effected and ratified,—that the contending parties were brought into harmonizing contact,—that the one bowed himſelf as a polluted but penitent man, and the other diſplayed his graciouſneſs as a forgiving God.—It was here that the Eternal, remembering his primeval promiſe, and having reſpect to its ultimate fulfilment, received into his regards and accepted the perſon of the proſtrate believer. It was here, that He paſſed over his perſonal tranſgreſſions, and imparted that grace by which the "enmity" of his nature was removed;—by which a change was effected in the diſpoſitions of the heart and the elements of the character;—by which a love to Himself and to holineſs

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was excited and ſuſtained;—and by which he was enabled, from that moment, to commence ſuch a courſe of "fellowſhip with God," as led to a height and a habit of excellence, unparalleled, perhaps, in the annals of the church.

In uſing the word "friendſhip," and ſimilar terms, to expreſs the firſt idea included in two perſons walking together, it is to be remembered, that, in the preſent case, it is friendſhip of a kind altogether peculiar. It reſts upon very different principles from thoſe which enter into the fellowſhip of equals. It is ſuppoſed to ſubſiſt between the finite and the infinite—between the great and adorable God, and an erring and mortal man. It implies, therefore, what human friendſhip never can imply, the unlimited ſubmiſſion of the one to the other. It ſuppoſes the ſubordinate mind to acquieſce entirely in the will of the Supreme. This principle lies at the very foundation of the union, and determines the conditions on which it is formed, preſerved, and perpetuated. Friendſhip of this kind can alone take place, when beings are brought into harmonizing contact, between whom there ſubſiſts an eſſential and infinite diſparity.

2. The figure may further expreſs the regard of the patriarch to habits of devotion. Enoch "walked with God" by a ſcrupulous attention to the exerciſes of worſhip, and by a conſtant recollection of the Divine preſence. Every ſacred engagement was performed with a holy alacrity. Every call to worſhip welcomed as it came, from its inviting him to contact with "the Father of Spirits." Every excurſion of ſanctified thought—every emotion of virtuous feeling—was ſuſtained and encouraged, in anticipation of the intercourſe, or as the reſult of its enjoyment. The thought of Deity was never unwelcome to him; he did not ſhun the idea when obviouſly preſented, nor attempt to repreſs it if it aroſe in his mind. With any of his voluntary trains of reflection, the thought of God might eaſily aſſimilate. He would have ſuſpected his virtue had this idea been long abſent; or if, when it came, it had appeared at variance with his cheriſhed ſuggeſtions. All his undertakings he may be

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to have referred to the Divine will;—his motives he remembered were expoſed to the ſcrutiny of the Divine obſervation;—his converſation was conducted with the conſtant feeling that God was his auditor. "*God was in all his thoughts.*" If he looked upon the heavens, he was there; if he contemplated the earth, he was there; if he retired into his own boſom, he was there. He felt his preſence preſſing, as it were, upon his ſenſes; it was the congenial element of his moral being,—the atmoſphere in which his ſpirit was refreſhed. There was no terror to *him* in the Great and Holy name;—*he* felt no tumultuary agitation, becauſe "God had beſet him behind and before, encompaſſing all his ways;" the recollection of this was rather a ſource of ſacred and animated pleaſure,—it inveſted every thing with a new property,—it diſcloſed to him the ſpiritual eſſence that pervades the univerſe,—and thus gave him ever to feel as within the circle of the ſublimeſt ſatisfactions. So familiar, I imagine, was the mind of the patriarch with the conception of God, and ſo awake to the inſignificance which it teaches us to attach to every ſublunary intereſt, that to him, any extended or intenſe proceſs of thought or feeling muſt have appeared impoſſible, if *it* were to be ſuppoſed unconnected with either.

3. Another idea included in the figure, is that of active obedience. The language, you may perceive, refers to ſomething more than a mere exerciſe of mind; it indicates not merely an attention to religious truth and devotional performances,—not merely to faith and worſhip,—but to all that is meant by active and practical virtue. Enoch "*walked*" with God. He was neither "dead" under actual ſin, nor "aſleep" in fancied ſecurity,—but he was "alive" and "awake" to the neceſſity of doing, and the opportunities of doing,—and he was occupied and buſy about the moralities of life. He did not content himſelf with thinking and feeling;—he did not ſuppoſe it was enough to reaſon and ſpeculate upon the "ſayings of God;"—he did not imagine he had done all when he profeſſed his

his belief in the direct or traditional announcements of the Divine voice;—he felt that this was but the foundation of the character—the beginning of "the work which God had given him to do;" that it afforded the outline,—ſhowed the parts and proportions of which the moral man was to conſiſt, but demanded from him unremitting aſſiduity to fill and to finiſh the picture. There is a paſſage in the prophet Malachi, which may be appropriately applied to Enoch under this head of the diſcourſe. Deſcribing the character of a tribe under the name of its founder, it is ſaid of him, "he walked with me in peace and equity." Here is a beautiful connection, you perceive, between pardon and righteouſneſs. He walked with God, not only in "peace," but in "equity;"—not only on the footing of friendſhip, as pardoned and reconciled; but on the footing of obedience, as one who felt the obligation to imitate and reſemble him. And thus it was with Enoch. *He* "walked in all the commandments of God blameleſs;" he aimed at exhibiting in his habits and his hiſtory, ſo far as infirmity permitted, the *reality* of that "idea" of excellence, which his intellect had acquired, by imbibing the conceptions of God on character and duty.

4. A fourth and laſt idea included in the figure, is that of progreſſive attainment and continued perſeverance. The phraſeology refers not merely to activity, but to activity that leads *onwards*. Enoch, like all the other patriarchs, was a pilgrim and a ſtranger;—he was ſeeking another and a more congenial country;—he had a journey to perform before he could behold or enter it;—and in that journey he made perpetual advances, by the conſtant putting forth of his own perſonal exertion. And he was not *weary* in well-doing;"—the way might at times appear long, or monotonous, or painful, or perplexed,—but he perſevered, becauſe it was the only way in which he could be favoured with a Divine aſſociate. In frequent and affectionate intercourſe with ſuperior excellence we catch ſomething of its ſpirit, and naturally learn to reſemble what we love;

and

and thus, in walking with God, Enoch received ſuch impreſſions of purity, and was ſo ſtrongly attracted towards infinite perfection, as to be led onward from attainment to attainment, and from glory to glory. Every day, as it cloſed upon his character, ſaw it in ſome reſpect improved,—ſaw ſome folly repreſſed,—ſome temptation reſiſted,—ſome virtue increaſed in its effulgence,—ſome new idea added to his knowledge,—or ſome quickened impulſe given to his piety. The character of Enoch, like that of every other man, aroſe from firſt elements and infantile excellence, and had to proceed through all the degrees of progreſſive advancement, before it arrived at its "perfect ſtrength." But then it never ſtood ſtill. He did not diſſipate, in a guſt of paſſion, what he had juſt gained by painful acquiſitions;—he did not laboriouſly form his plans, and then become careleſs and ſlothful, as if they could realize themſelves;—he did not neglect one part of character, from excluſive devotion to another;—but, fixing a high aim, and exerciſing univerſal ſolicitude, he proceeded in his courſe "like the light of the morning, which ſhines more and more unto the perfect day."

Such, my brethren, is a rapid ſketch of the character and life of this great and diſtinguiſhed man. Such as we have deſcribed, were the elements and the expreſſions of his devotion and his virtue; ſuch the qualities, which Jehovah honoured with ſignal approbation. God beheld, as it were, his own image, impreſſed upon one of the minds which he had made, but ſtanding almoſt alone in the midſt of a "perverſe and crooked generation;" he put forth the hand which had adorned his ſervant with the "beauties of holineſs," and, in one moment, removed ſuch pre-eminent perfection from the earth;—removed it to a higher and holier world, to meet with kindred excellence, and to mingle with congenial ſociety.

Diſcourſe iv.

The Faith of Enoch.

HEB. XI. 5, 6.

By faith Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God. But without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe Him.

PROCEEDING with the train of obſervation which we preſcribed to ourſelves in the preceding diſcourſe, we propoſe, as our firſt object in this, to ſhow how faith was illuſtrated and diſplayed in the life of Enoch.

"Enoch, before his tranſlation, had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God;" "but without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him;" therefore, all that conſtituted the excellence of Enoch, was the reſult of this principle. In his "walking with God," he exemplified the New Teſtament repreſentation, "we walk by faith and not by ſight." To be ſatisfied of this—ſatisfied that "faith" formed the ſource of his activity and zeal, it may be proper to refer to the Apoſtle's definition of it, as already deſcribed,

deſcribed, and to apply it, in one or other of its ſenſes, to each of the virtues attributed to the patriarch.

"Faith is the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, and the confident expectation of things hoped for." "It is the repoſe of the intellect, and the repoſe of the affections." All the ſtatements of Scripture, concerning the future or the paſt,—all its doctrines, reſpecting the Object of worſhip and the method of mercy,—are facts—"things not ſeen"—the admiſſion of which, on the authority of God, originates what we term the repoſe of the intellect. That is to ſay, the human underſtanding, either ſearching into ſubjects which it cannot comprehend, or oppreſſed by inquiries and doubts which it cannot ſatisfy, takes the ſtatements of God juſt as it finds them, and emerges from ignorance and anxiety to knowledge and reſt. Then, the ſame authority that has ſaid that ſuch things *are*, is ſeen alſo to have promiſed that certain other things *ſhall be*; faithfulneſs becomes now aſſociated with wiſdom; God is not only believed "to *be*," but to be "a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him;" his moral character inſpires perfect dependence; the agitations of fear ſubſide; a calm and felicitous confidence is felt;—this is faith, as previouſly deſignated, the repoſe of the affections.

This principle, though we denominate it repoſe, is the excluſive ſource of acceptable exertion. To the one or the other of its aſpects, or to both of them combined, you may refer each of the four grand features of Enoch's character. Speaking ſcientifically, we might ſay, that the moral phenomena of which that character conſiſted, are accounted for by this, and by nothing elſe. It is true, individual appearances, partially reſembling ſome of them, may often, in other men, be interpreted by referring them to the operation of inferior agencies; but theſe, in Enoch, when properly conſidered, as to their true nature and beautiful combination, their extent and continuance, will be found to demand faith as their producing principle, and to demand it in no ordinary degree of purity and vigour.

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In the firſt thing which "walking with God" was conſidered to imply, namely, friendſhip or reconciliation, faith is ſeen in both the ſenſes already illuſtrated,—both as the perſuaſion of the intellect and the repoſe of the heart,—a reception of truth and a confidence in character. We obſerved, in the laſt diſcourſe, that, as there never has been but one way in which a ſinner can be pardoned, or in which he can acquire the friendſhip of offended Deity, we regard it as certain, that, ſince ſuch friendſhip was enjoyed by Enoch, he had approached God and expreſſed his faith in the ſame manner in which Abel had done before him. That, conſcious of ſin and anxious for acceptance, he ended all his inquiries reſpecting how man was to be reconciled to God, by implicitly receiving the teſtimony of the fathers as to every matter connected with the queſtion; and that, in conſequence of this, he met with God over a bleeding ſacrifice, feeling firmly aſſured that becauſe he had appointed this mode of approach, he would have reſpect unto his promiſe and redeem him from death. Had he, like Cain, preſumptuouſly departed from the requiſitions of the Moſt High; or, had he loſt his time and his tranquillity in curious ſpeculations; that reconciliation would never have reſulted, which formed the grand foundation of his intercourſe with God. But, taking the principles of his religion on the authority of the ſpeaker,—feeling that *He* knew beſt what to appoint and what to inſiſt upon,—that his wiſdom would appoint only what was proper, and his mercy require only what was requiſite, and his truth fulfil every aſſurance,—he believed, and acted, and enjoyed; he diſplayed his faith by an implicit admiſſion of what God ſaid, and a confident reſting upon what God had promiſed; that is, by "the perſuaſion of things not ſeen, and the expectation of things hoped for," he acquainted himſelf with God, and was at peace.

In the ſecond thing by which Enoch was diſtinguiſhed,—the habitual recollection of the Divine preſence,—there was a diſplay of faith in that ſenſe of it, in which it ſpecifically relates to the "perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen." The exiſtence

and the attributes of God are a part of theſe things. "No man hath ſeen God at any time." We believe that he *is*,—that his preſence pervades and animates the creation,—"that he is about our path and about our bed, encompaſſing all our ways." This is a truth,—an actual exiſting fact,—independently of us or our perceptions; its realization or neglect forms the principal difference between man and man; and the *degree* of intenſity with which it is felt, is the moſt ſtriking indication of the character. Few will deny the fact as expreſſed in words. Speak to any one you meet of the Divine preſence, and you will find a ready admiſſion of its reality and extent. The admiſſion may be general; but that feeling perſuaſion of the thing which conſtitutes faith, which conſiſts in its realization, and which was diſplayed by Enoch, are extremely rare. *He* lived under an habitual impreſſion of the truth; and this he could do only by a vivid perception of what was unſeen; by illuſtrating, in fact, that apparent contradiction of ſacred Scripture, "*ſeeing Him who is inviſible.*" This is one of the triumphs of the great principle which we are attempting to illuſtrate. It is an important part of the victory which it teaches us to obtain over the world. The palpable realities of the preſent ſcene are making ſuch inceſſant impreſſions on the ſenſes, that it requires a conſtant effort of abſtraction to evade their influence, and to feel ourſelves within the preſence and inſpection of the Deity. This power, however, is to be acquired; it conſiſts in the exerciſe of faith,—that principle which enables the mind firmly to graſp the facts of the ſpiritual ſtate, and which gives to the pure and ſimple conceptions of the intellect, all the force and diſtinctneſs of actual appearances.

The third and fourth things by which Enoch was diſtinguiſhed,—his moral activity and progreſſive advancement,—may properly be claſſed together. That they are to be referred to the exerciſe of faith, two brief and general obſervations will evince.

Firſt. All religious excellence is the fruit of that grace, which He who imparts every good and perfect gift, has promiſed

miſed to communicate; and it is obtained by that faith which confides in the promiſe, and which prompts us to ſeek it by fervent ſupplication. This grace is one of the things that are "hoped for." It is placed before the mind as ready to be given. The man may be oppreſſed by a ſenſe of his weakneſs; his heart may ſink within him when he looks at the warfare to which he is called; his courage may depart, and his zeal decay: but when faith can repoſe upon the promiſe of aſſiſtance, and the heart can utter its voice at the mercy-ſeat, the principle reſtores again his wavering reſolution, by obtaining "grace to help in the time of need,"—it thus leads him to the fountain of life and vigour, and repleniſhes the ſoul with the eſſential element of practical activity.

Secondly. Perſeverance is promoted by faith, as it is this principle that penetrates into eternity, expatiates, as it were, over the ſcenes of our anticipated being, and realizes the future reſults of the preſent exiſtence. It teaches the mind to riſe beyond the influence of immediate impreſſions; it points, under all circumſtances, with undeviating ſteadineſs, to that better country, of the exiſtence of which the Divine teſtimony is felt to be indubitable proof. It is this that animates effort to conſtancy and attainment. Many are the inſinuating ſeductions that would allure us to indolent repoſe, and ſtrong is the tendency of nature to liſten to their voice; ſevere is the ſelf-denial and difficult the warfare, which we have often to exerciſe and maintain; and, except by a faith which penetrates within the veil, and aſſures us both of the things that are "not ſeen," and of thoſe that are "hoped for," we ſhould be utterly unable to reſiſt and overcome. There *are* circumſtances under which, if this world were our only reſidence, virtue would have the worſt of it; and when, if this were aſcertained or preſumed, no adequate motive could be brought to ſecure our perſeverance:—there is ſometimes a concurrence of all that can be deſired for the ſucceſsful perpetration of wickedneſs; impulſe, opportunity, advantage, concealment; when no conſideration, derived exclu-

ſively from the preſent ſtate, could operate with power; but faith, diſplaying to the imagination the worlds that are not ſeen, with all their exquiſite proviſions for the production alike of agony and rapture, commands obedience and prompts deciſion when nothing elſe could ſecure or maintain them. In advancing with the characters to be ſucceſſively contemplated, we ſhall have frequent occaſion to notice their faith under this aſpect. It is often dwelt upon, indeed, by the Apoſtle, and ſeems to enter into the very eſſence of practical religion; and well may it become to us a theme of obſervation and appeal, ſeeing that we too are required, both "by the terrors of the Lord, to perſuade men," and alſo, to convey the ineſtimable aſſurance, that "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding even an eternal weight of glory; WHILE we look, *not* at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal."

2.

HAVING attempted to ſhow how the character of Enoch was formed by the operation of faith, we proceed to notice the extraordinary manner in which God ſaw fit to remove him from the earth. "*By faith Enoch was tranſlated.*"

By the tranſlation of Enoch we underſtand that he was taken up bodily into heaven, without ſuſtaining that appalling infliction which we denominate *death*. "Fleſh and blood," however, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and therefore we infer, that a miraculous change paſſed upon his perſon, ſimilar to that which the Apoſtle predicts, as awaiting thoſe "who ſhall be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord;" ſimilar, in fact, to that which paſſed upon the Lord himſelf, after his reſurrection, in conſequence of which, to uſe the expreſſion of a learned prelate, all that was previouſly miraculous became natural, and all

all that was previouſly natural became miraculous. "There is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body." The latter phraſe, though apparently ſelf-contradictory, is juſtified by the fact to which we have adverted. Indeed, if it were not,—if there were no facts of ſuch a nature recorded in Scripture, yet, from our neceſſary ignorance of the ſpiritual ſtate, it would be improper to call it a contradiction, for, for any thing *we* can tell, the production of a ſubſtance thus deſcribed *may* be within the compaſs of the Divine power. We believe that it is. We believe that *ſeveral* facts are ſtated in Scripture, by which the ſimple aſſertion of the Apoſtle is confirmed. "There *is* a ſpiritual body." This, we imagine, will retain a reſemblance to that which at preſent we poſſeſs. It will have a viſible figure; it will have the appearance of the preſent without its groſſneſs; it will not be dependent on food; it will not be ſenſible of fatigue; it will be incapable of decay; it will partake of the immortality of ſpirit, and may, perhaps, of its velocity of movement. Now, a change which effected or prepared him for all this, paſſed, we preſume, on the perſon of the patriarch. The elements of his frame were eſſentially altered; its properties became different; its nature imperiſhable; its relation to earth, and its dependence on what is earthly, were deſtroyed. Enoch could not have enjoyed exiſtence here, had he continued after this. He was now fitted for a more ethereal ſtation; he was prepared for a ſublimer world; he was capable of a higher agency, and nobler duties; he was alive to purer pleaſures, and richer ſenſibilities: and he was removed, therefore, to the immediate preſence of the Supreme, where all is congenial with that new nature which had been miraculouſly conferred. It would be altogether childiſh to reject the fact becauſe we cannot comprehend it. It is myſterious; but ſo is the creation of a man at firſt, and ſo is the birth of every individual. There is ſomething as incomprehenſible in the ſecret and gradual proceſſes that change a helpleſs infant into a man, as in that ſudden transformation by which this incorruptible puts on incorruption,

and

and this mortal puts on immortality. We can no more explain the one than we can the other; each is wonderful, but that which conſtitutes the wonder equally eludes our detection and development in both. Admit, in any caſe, the exertion of infinite power, and nothing is difficult. It can do any thing that does not involve a phyſical or moral contradiction; and there is neither the one nor the other in the miraculous tranſlation of an eminent ſaint, at a time when ſuch an event might poſſibly exert an immenſe influence on the religious hiſtory of the world. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." *

Of the time and circumſtances of this event we have no minute or ſpecific information. The language employed, both by Moſes and Paul, would indicate that it was ſudden. The one ſays, "He was not, for God took him;" the other, "He was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him;" both expreſſions ſeem to imply that the event was unexpected, at leaſt to his friends. He was miſſed by them. He diſappeared from his accuſtomed avocations; he mingled not with his uſual aſſociates. They ſeem to have ſought for him, but diſcovered no retreat in which he was concealed. Something poſſibly was found indicating the event, or the knowledge of it might be imparted to ſome holy contemporary; or, after a ſhort period of anxiety, the actual witneſſes of the miracle might appear, and their teſtimony be accompanied by the pledges of indubitable truth. Perhaps the faith of the patriarch might have been previouſly tried, by an actual promiſe from God, reſpecting the mode of his removal. In the abſence of all knowledge of any ſimilar event, it would require a ſtrong exertion of faith not to be ſtaggered by the aſſurance; and, if, after the promiſe, the period of conſummation were long delayed, this, in connection

* The properties of the "ſpiritual body," as enumerated by the Apoſtle, may be ſeen admirably illuſtrated in a ſermon on the "Reſurrection," by the Rev. J. P. Dobſon, recently publiſhed. The whole diſcourſe, indeed, is diſtinguiſhed both for its argumentative ability and vigorous eloquence.

with

with the ridicule to which it might expoſe him, would ſeverely try the ſtrength of the principle. It ſeems more likely, however, the change might be as unexpected to himſelf as it was to others. What a moment would be that of its actual occurrence! What mingled ſenſations muſt have attended it! What awe and aſtoniſhment, ſurpriſe and rapture, muſt have ſeemed to ſeize at once the ſpirit of the patriarch! He was walking, perhaps, among the works of God, ſurveying the proofs of his wiſdom and benignity; or he was indulging deep and agitating reflections on the depravity of man and the myſteries of Providence; or he might be pouring out his ſoul in prayer,—engaged in the very act of devotion,—and, "in an inſtant,"—"in the twinkling of an eye,"—the whole range of his impreſſions would be transformed! and, inſtead of the voice of ſupplication, and the ſociety of men, he would feel himſelf joining in the ſervices of heaven; ſurrounded by the elder ſons of creation, unfallen in ſtate, and perfect in obedience.

3.

THE tranſlation of Enoch, in relation to the purpoſes it was deſigned to anſwer, may be regarded in three different aſpects:—as it reſpected himſelf; as it reſpected the exiſting generation; and as it reſpects the church in all ages.

As it reſpected himſelf, it was intended, perhaps, both as a diſtinction and a mercy. An illuſtrious diſtinction it unqueſtionably was; it was, no doubt, deſigned as a reward for his piety and faith, conferred by Him whom he had "delighted to honour." But it is more eſpecially to be regarded in the latter view. The world was advanced ſome centuries at the time of his birth; and when we conſider the early effect of the apoſtacy, and connect that with what would be the rapid advance of evil, and the corrupting influence of men upon each other, as the ſpecies continued to increaſe in numbers, there can be no doubt that impiety and wickedneſs were both great and general during the

the life-time of this admirable man. Indeed, this ſeems to be implied in the very quality for which he is revered in the church. The language of the hiſtorian and the apoſtle equally ſuggeſt, that, in the days of the patriarch, "walking with God" was by no means common. Had the thing been common, it would have conferred no diſtinction. The majority of men did *not* walk with God, for, if they had, Enoch never could have been celebrated as ſingularly virtuous. Hence it is poſſible, we preſume, that his tranſlation might be an emanation of mercy as well as a "recompence of reward." His moral ſenſibility, I can imagine, might have become ſo fine, and his love to the law of God ſo exalted and inceſſant, that the ſight of the depravity which would every where meet him, might produce the moſt exquiſite and agonizing impreſſions on his heart. "Rivers of water," ſays David, "run down mine eyes, becauſe men keep not thy law." David was probably inferior to Enoch in his religious attainments, and therefore it *might* be that, having lived long enough to be a witneſs for God, God graciouſly removed him from a world which he was no longer fitted to inhabit; a world pregnant with nothing to him but ſources of anguiſh, ſounds of blaſphemy, and ſpectacles of crime.

Conſiderable light will be obtained as to the aſpect of this extraordinary event in relation to the people of his time, by remembering that Enoch was a prophet and a preacher of righteouſneſs. We have no document from his own hand; but, in the Epiſtle of Jude, we have one of his prophecies preſerved by tradition. This prophecy, too, is of a very remarkable kind. It refers to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment upon the ungodly, and to avenge the hard ſpeeches which preſumptuous ſinners had uttered againſt him. Here two things are remarkable. *Firſt*, that Enoch was a preacher and a prophet in the midſt of "an ungodly and perverſe generation." Hence, his tranſlation might be intended as one thing in the order of means, by which the Divine Spirit, "ſtriving with man," might deſign to give a ſolemnity and power to his inſtructions. It might

might be ſuppoſed, that ſome who diſregarded his admonitions when living among them, or who derided and denied his pretenſions to teach, might be impreſſed by this ſignal proof of the Divine approbation; and many an exhortation might be expected to be recalled, and to come with augmented force, when the preacher would be regarded in a manner as addreſſing them from heaven. A *ſecond* conſideration is ſuggeſted by the character and terms of the prophecy itſelf. It ſeems that a principal topic with the prophet was a coming judgment and a future ſtate. This was, perhaps, the very cauſe of thoſe "hard ſpeeches" of which he complains. It is eaſy to ſuppoſe that there were "ſcoffers" in thoſe days as well as at preſent; men, who, while the prophet was proclaiming the coming of the Lord, might aſk for the promiſe, or the precurſors, of his coming, and point to the conſtancy and uniformity of nature, in which all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world: and, taunting him with his ſobriety and ſelf-denial, his abſurd hypocriſy and puritanical pretenſions, might inſult him with their infidel jeſts, and reel to their wretched revelry with the maxim of their ſucceſſors in their mouths—"let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." All this is at leaſt *poſſible;* for my part, I think it *likely;* and I regard, therefore, the tranſlation of the prophet, as intended to prove to an infatuated world the actual exiſtence of a future ſtate, and the poſitive fact of human immortality. Under whatever circumſtances the miracle might occur,—whether ſecret and ſudden; whether unexpected or promiſed; whether witneſſed at the moment, or afterwards aſcertained by ſubſequent evidence; there can be no doubt that it was known and believed by the exiſting generation; ſome and ſufficient means were employed by Providence to impreſs its truth upon the public mind; and the intention of Providence unqueſtionably was, to give a certainty and a ſanction to thoſe truths which the patriarch had preached, and to exhibit, in his own perſon, a ſplendid diſplay of the reality of them all.

The

The purpoſes to be anſwered by the event in its relation to the church in all ages, may be briefly comprehended in the following obſervations. It ſhould tend to encourage us amid the perplexities and temptations of the preſent ſtate. We ſhould *ſee* in it the truth of what we *hear* from the Apoſtle,—"God is not unfaithful to forget your works of faith and your labours of love." "Though the bleſſing tarry, wait for it; it ſhall ſurely come, it ſhall not tarry." In contemplating the character and reward of Enoch, we ſhould ſurely be animated in the proſecution of the conteſt to which we are called. We ſhould be prompted to perſevere,—to preſs onward,—whatever dangers may appal, or whatever temptations would ſeduce. There may be much to ſuffer and to do. There may be a thouſand varieties of evil to contend with, in proportion as we aim with zeal and exactneſs "to walk with God;" but recollecting the recompence with which *Enoch* was rewarded, we may be aſſiſted to perſevere with a conſtancy like his. We ought never to forget, that what he *is*, all of us may become. There will be no difference ultimately between him and the reſt of the redeemed. There is a difference in the *manner* of their arriving at perfection, but there will be none in the fact of their perfection itſelf. The great majority of the faithful will not be tranſlated as he was; but they will poſſeſs the ſame kind of glory when, riſing from the ſepulchre, "the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall change their vile body, and make it like unto his own glorious body, by that power by which he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf." The event, therefore, to which we have ſo often adverted, has thus a tendency to encourage (if I may be permitted the phraſe) a virtuous ambition in all who believe it; inflaming them with a deſire to ſhare in the rapture and partake the triumph of glorified humanity! Still further; as our faith in the promiſes of God is greatly aſſiſted by knowing not merely the truth that he can do what he has ſaid, but the fact that in ſome inſtances he has actually done it; ſo, in this view, the tranſlation of Enoch may prove of ineſtimable value to the church. God has already conferred

conferred all the benefits of a reſurrection upon ſome of our brethren "of like paſſions with ourſelves;" and what he has done once, he can do again; what he has done for others he can do for us; what he has done in a ſingle inſtance, he can do in ten thouſand. We have already in heaven, not merely the glorified body of the Lord, whoſe myſterious nature and immaculate perfection conſtitute ſo eſſential a difference between him and us, as at times to awe and to repreſs, rather than excite; but we have a repreſentative and a brother, in one who was once ſubject to ſin, and had to ſtruggle with depravity, as much perhaps as the worſt and weakeſt of us all; and we feel that the very ſame grace to which *he* was indebted for his illuſtrious virtue and ſublime elevation, can, and will, if we truſt it, convey us into the ſame region, and place us in ſafety by his ſide.

"Whatever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope;" and we doubt not, that by looking at the record before us, the mind of many a believer has been ſoothed and encouraged, ſo that the general purpoſe of the Spirit in the whole of revelation has been often and abundantly fulfilled with reſpect to this ſpecific and memorable fact.

4.

BY the hiſtory of Enoch there ſeems to be one great leſſon inculcated and enforced. He is celebrated for "walking with God." The care with which this is recorded, in connection with the miraculous fact of his tranſlation, would appear to imply that there is ſomething eminently remarkable in the circumſtance. That, we imagine, is the complete conqueſt, which ſuch a habit demonſtrates had been achieved over the eſſential element of depravity; and the moral fitneſs which had thence neceſſarily reſulted for the ſublime engagements of the ſpiritual ſtate. If there be any one thing that conſtitutes

conſtitutes the characteriſtic attribute of the unrenewed mind, this is that thing,—*it does not like to retain God in its knowledge.* "The natural man is enmity againſt God." "God is not in all his thoughts." There is, in many, a willing forgetfulneſs of his preſence and his claims, and a repugnance to whatever would remind them of either. The idea of Deity is irritating and unwelcome; it is expelled from their aſſociations as an intruſion and offence; or, at leaſt, it is permitted to exert no influence on the regulation of feeling and the government of life. This inherent diſlike to "walking with God," betrayed, either by poſitive hoſtility or conſtant forgetfulneſs, is the diſtinguiſhing attribute of apoſtate natures. The proof of its exiſtence and operation in man, is to be ſeen, not merely in the haunts and receſſes of infamy and pollution:—there, indeed, you may obtain a dark and dreadful demonſtration of the ſin; but you may find the *principle*, in all its rancour and malignity, in many a man of eulogized excellence. Such a man may have cultivated and diſplayed much of the commanding and the attractive of character,—all that is "juſt," and "pure," and "lovely," and of "good report;" he may be diſtinguiſhed for unbending integrity, and expanſive benevolence, and inflexible truth; he may never have been known even to approach to anything like a great or voluntary violation, either of kindly feeling or honourable conduct; he may thus have earned from ſociety the reward of profoundeſt admiration and reſpect;—but ſtill it is to be remembered, that all the excellence for which he is remarkable, is required, by the law of ſecular morality, as well as by the law of God; obedience to either is ſufficient to produce it; and, it may be, that a regard merely to the *firſt*—a ſenſe of ſocial obligation, and a concern for perſonal character—may have animated this *virtuous* man in the whole round of his moral acquiſitions!—He may never have thought of "living to the Lord;" never for a moment have acted with "a deſire to pleaſe Him;" he may even deny his exiſtence;—or, if he admit it, he may ridicule the

the mention of the motive adverted to. *He* could have been all that he is, had he been *certain* that there was neither Divine law, governor, nor judge; and to him, in fact, there has virtually *been* neither, for the thought of them has never been the reaſon why he did or forbore any action, the avoidance or the performance of which has diſtinguiſhed his character. It is thus that the inherent proof of the apoſtacy, the eſſential element of ſin, may reign in the man who is poſitively pre-eminent for his attributes of excellence, and regaled by the incenſe of ſurrounding admiration.

I can thus conceive of a virtuous atheiſt:—that is, I can conceive that natural diſpoſition and purely ſecular conſiderations may produce a very high degree of perſonal and ſocial excellence in a man who has brought himſelf to believe that there is no God. But it is to be remembered, that the man who profeſſes to believe the contrary, profeſſes to believe that there *is* a God, but who never thinks of him,—that man is virtuous juſt on the ſame principles and to the ſame extent; and, juſt in proportion, therefore, as any of you act, without an habitual recollection of the Divine preſence, and a deſigned regard to the Divine pleaſure, juſt in that proportion is your virtue neither more nor leſs than the offspring of atheiſm. It is no better, and it cannot be worſe,—worſe, I mean, in relation to eternity; for, with reſpect to the preſent world, it may really be both beautiful in itſelf, and ſerviceable to you, but then *in* the preſent world, it will have its reward. It ariſes from conſiderations entirely confined to it; it is inſpired by motives excluſively earthly; ſo far as earth is concerned, we repeat our admiſſion that it may actually be "lovely and of good report;" but, ſo far as *God* is concerned, as it is totally independent of all reference to *Him*, it will certainly appear to you, when placed in his preſence, as nothing but a ſpecies of ſplendid iniquity!—For what is called virtue, therefore, to be of any value as a preſent preparation for the ſucceeding ſtate, it muſt ariſe from a principle which ſhall be applicable to the duties

duties of both worlds;—a principle which may influence in heaven as well as upon earth;—a principle upon which it may be poſſible to act when you are called to aſſociate with ſpiritual natures, and when placed where God cannot but be ſeen; as well as when ſurrounded by preſent ſociety, and placed where his preſence is a truth to be believed. Now, ſuch a principle is that, which conſiſts of the vivid and practical realization of this very truth. It is this, which, while it prompts to certain other virtues, which ſecular morality does not include, pervades with a new property, and inveſts with a higher character, all that ſecular morality can ſuggeſt. Under this principle the man does all he did before, but he does it from another motive—a direct and inceſſant reference to God. In ſuch a man, the ſpecific element of depravity is ſucceeded by the ſpecific element of holineſs. His excellence is thus of a kind altogether diſtinct from that of the world. When he leaves his preſent condition of exiſtence, and his preſent *mode* of moral activity, he can carry with him the principle from which that activity ſprings, to any place where God is to be ſerved. There is in the principle an eſſential congeniality to the engagements of the place. It requires to undergo no change in itſelf, it only changes its mode of practical manifeſtation. The man had before "walked with God," and now he is "with Him." The difference is not in the *nature* of the thing, only in its circumſtances. While here, whatever he did was done "unto God," but this is all that ever can be done, either by pureſt and higheſt natures, or by any nature in its pureſt and higheſt ſtate. This, therefore, while it exalts and ſublimes the duties of earth, is alſo the elementary preparation for the duties of heaven.

It is thus that the ſtate of mind which diſtinguiſhed Enoch is ſeen to poſſeſs ſuch incomparable worth. It implied, not indeed the extinction, but the conqueſt, of the evil principle;—that principle, which diſliking and oppoſing itſelf to God, leaves room for nothing in the character but the contracted aim

aim and ſuperficial appearances of ſecular virtue: and it implied alſo the operation of another principle;—one which, delighting itſelf in God, infuſes into virtue itſelf that which entirely changes its nature and its name, and which capacitates the man for all that is to conſtitute either the duty or the bliſs of heaven. In exact proportion as this is poſſeſſed, are we prepared for the ſpiritual engagements of the kingdom of God. In that proportion have we approached, as it were, the precincts of eternity. When we conſider how near Enoch muſt have approached, from the manner in which he is celebrated in the church, we ſeem to ceaſe to wonder at his ſudden diſappearance. We begin to think it almoſt in the order of nature, that, having advanced ſo cloſe to the ſpiritual ſtate,—having come, as it were, within the ſphere of its attraction—he ſhould be drawn at length irreſiſtibly into it, and ſhould thus find his faith at once terminated and transformed by the inſtantaneous burſting on his ſenſes of the glory and the gratulations of the upper world.

NOTE.

[" *Infuſes into virtue itſelf that which entirely changes its nature and its name.*"] That attention to perſonal and relative duties which renders character morally excellent, though it ariſe from nothing but conſiderations limited to the preſent ſtate, may yet, in one ſenſe, properly be denominated *virtue*. It is the virtue of this world;—that is to ſay, it is conduct exactly agreeing to all the relations ſuſtained by human nature ſo far as this world is concerned, and, if there were no other world, and no God, would be the perfection of that nature. When, however, this ſame attention to perſonal and relative duties proceeds from other principles, from a conſtant and reverential regard to the Divine will, it is denominated *holineſs*; then, it is the virtue of this world ſuſtaining a new relation to Deity, juſt as, under the law, a veſſel was conſidered "holy" when taken from common uſe and "conſecrated to the Lord." A man, before and after converſion, may perform the very ſame acts of ſelf-control, generoſity, or juſtice; the ſame as to the material of them—as to what meets the eye of a human obſerver; but, in the latter caſe, their *nature will be completely changed* from what they were before, in conſequence of their new relation to God, ariſing from their

their being done with a deſire to pleaſe and "conſecrated" to Him. This direct relation or reference to God, of all moral acts and emotions, is, pre-eminently, the virtue of heaven. That is, it is the virtue of all moral natures, whoſe conduct perfectly harmonizes with all their relations to all beings. When this *kind* of virtue is contemplated as poſſeſſed by thoſe of an apoſtate or depraved ſpecies, it is termed *ſanctification*; that is, it is in them not a natural property, but a ſuperinduced effect, the reſult of ſome cleanſing and purifying proceſs. Every ſanctified being is *holy*; but every holy being is not *ſanctified*: both ſanctified and holy beings are *virtuous*, but there *is* a virtue which is neither holineſs nor ſanctification. A natural man, poſſeſſed of what we term ſecular excellence, may be ſpoken of as virtuous, but nothing elſe. An angel may be ſpoken of as either virtuous or holy, but nothing elſe. A regenerated man may be ſpoken of as either virtuous, holy, or ſanctified. Thus, the word virtue, it ſeems, according to the ſenſe with which it is aſſociated, may be uſed in relation to each of theſe beings reſpectively, though the moral character of each is ſpecifically different; hence, it is often employed to expreſs either inherent or infuſed holineſs,—that is, the holineſs either of an angel or a ſaint. In this caſe, however, it is always to be underſtood according to its moſt enlarged and comprehenſive ſignification; for, if it be underſtood otherwiſe, namely, in the loweſt ſenſe above adverted to, it is an imperfect, and may prove a dangerous ſubſtitute for the ſcriptural terms. On the whole, I cannot but think it is not without reaſon that its frequent uſe is objected to in Chriſtian compoſitions. It occurs, perhaps, too often in the preſent publication; yet, I am quite perſuaded that the employment of the term will not be injurious, if the diſtinctions now drawn be properly regarded, and the doctrines pervading the diſcourſes be adequately felt.

Diſcourſe V.

The Faith of Noah.

HEB. xi. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

WE now come to the contemplation of a character, whoſe name is aſſociated with one of the moſt ſtupendous events in the hiſtory of the world. Laſt Sabbath we had the delightful duty of exhibiting an unparalleled diſplay of Divine regard, in the tranſlation of individual excellence: this morning, we are to witneſs the unparalleled puniſhment of impiety and crime, in the violent infliction of univerſal death. In connection, indeed, with the hiſtory of Enoch, it became us to advert to the probable wickedneſs of the exiſting generation; but *then* the Spirit of God ſtill continued to ſtrive with man; the removal of the patriarch was itſelf an event adapted to awaken inquiry and lead to repentance: *now*, however, the time for ſuch expedients of compaſſion is paſſed away,—the very forbearance of God is exhauſted,—he is to be beheld "coming forth from his place" "in the fury of his terrible indignation" to puniſh and exterminate

nate the "workers of iniquity." Yet even this is not to be a ſcene of undiſtinguiſhing deſtruction; becauſe this world, depraved as it had become, was not the theatre of unmitigated guilt; for "*by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.*"

The name of Noah, it has already been remarked, is aſſociated with an event of ſtupendous magnitude. This event, the deſtruction of all fleſh by water, with the exception of the patriarch and his family, is detailed with conſiderable minuteneſs by Moſes in the book "Geneſis." It is referred to, as an admitted and unqueſtionable truth, by the prophets of the Old and by the apoſtles of the New Teſtament. In ſome of the devotional poetry of the Jewiſh church, in which the government of God is celebrated, it is mentioned as a matter of fact familiar to the people. It is alluded to in the ſame way, by our Lord himſelf; and, more than once, exhortations and reaſonings, founded upon it, are addreſſed by his ſervants to the Chriſtian believers. The certainty of the occurrence is thus ſuſtained, not merely by the authority of the primitive hiſtorian, but by all the evidence which goes to eſtabliſh the inſpiration of thoſe other writers, who take it for granted in their prophetic and apoſtolic communications. And this, it may be obſerved, is an argument of conſiderable force, in ſupport of thoſe extraordinary events which the Jewiſh hiſtory records. If, reſpecting theſe, you have moments of ſcepticiſm, or if you feel it difficult, at times, to ſee the ſufficiency of the external evidence which excluſively ſupports the ancient documents; remember that we have another ſet of documents, whoſe truth and authenticity may be demonſtrated with comparative eaſe and ample ſatisfaction; we have the hiſtory and the ſentiments of thoſe who could give their ſuffrage to nothing but truth; and we find them, under the guidance of that Spirit whoſe influence either repleniſhed their minds or preſerved them from error, actually giving

giving their ſupport to what was previouſly written; and thus all the maſs of argument and proof that ſo illuſtriouſly ſuſtains the one ſet of writings, does, by this means, as really and emphatically ſuſtain the other ſet of writings;—the whole evidence that proves the inſpiration of the evangeliſts and apoſtles of the Chriſtian church, alſo proves the inſpiration of the hiſtorians and prophets of the Jewiſh church; for we find the former expreſſing their belief of all that the latter relate, and conſtantly referring to them "as holy men of God, who ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt."

A univerſal, and univerſally deſtructive deluge, is certainly a moſt appalling and tremendous fact. It is not to be accounted for on merely natural principles. It muſt either be denied altogether, or admitted to be miraculous. Conſidered as miraculous, it is of courſe to be regarded as the direct infliction of the Supreme Ruler. To this thought ſucceed our notions of his moral character, and then we begin to feel perplexed from the apparent inconſiſtency of ſuch an event with the attributes of perfect wiſdom and infinite beneficence. Here, however, let us remember, that the conſiſtency of what God does, in any caſe, depends, not upon our ſeeing it, or upon any creature, or any claſs of creatures, ſeeing it. If he does the thing, it muſt be right from that very circumſtance, however inexplicable to inferior natures. They may ultimately be able to comprehend it; but if not,—if it remain for ever a riddle and a myſtery,—*their* duty is ſtill the ſame,—to feel that it muſt be good, and wiſe and juſt, becauſe done by Him who is perfect juſtice, goodneſs, and wiſdom; "who giveth no account of his matters," and whoſe "glory," at times, "is to conceal a thing." Whether, indeed, any part, or any act, of the Divine government, in connection with any world, will remain *eternally* inexplicable, it is impoſſible to ſay; it would rather ſeem *not;* as this would appear to contradict the expreſſed purpoſe of God to juſtify his government in the view of the univerſe, and be inconſiſtent with the predicted happineſs of mind. But *were* it to be ſo,—

were ſuch an eternal difficulty to be felt,—then, the ſubmiſſion already deſcribed would be, *eternally*, the duty of his creatures. It *may* be, however, that, even in the future world, myſterious diſplays of the Divine conduct ſhall often occur; ſhall be explained by ſubſequent acts, and succeeded by ſimilar diſplays; and that the employment of our minds upon theſe, to aſcertain what they involve of the knowledge of God, may be one of the means for exalting our nature, enlarging our conceptions, and perfecting our reaſon; and if ſo, then, whenever any ſuch diſplay paſſes before us, we ſhall feel it right to do in heaven, what ſome proudly refuſe to do upon earth,—deſire as the angels at preſent, reverently to explore the ſacred wonder, but be willing to wait for the perfect development to be afforded by others. If ſuch humility would conſiſt with the ultimate ſtate, both of unfallen and redeemed intelligences, ſurely it ſhould be felt by *us*, while in the infancy of our being; while placed in a world of temptation and darkneſs, ignorant of almoſt every thing but this,—that our condition demands and our circumſtances are intended for the trial of our faith. It is not for us, with our limited knowledge and imperfect viſion, to ſit as judges upon what God does, to pronounce on its fitneſs and propriety; but, firſt ſatisfying the mind that he *has done* it, it becomes us to look at the matter, whatever its myſterioufneſs, with ſuch a profound conviction of its entire rectitude, as may diſpoſe us to receive from it impreſſions of piety and topics of inſtruction.

"Firſt ſatisfying the mind that he has done it." The ſubmiſſion demanded, even from us, is not, you obſerve, an uninquiring and unintelligent ſubmiſſion. It ſuppoſes inquiry and knowledge up to a certain point, and can only be exerciſed conſiſtently beyond it. It implies the aſſurance of the underſtanding upon two things, namely, the reality, and the ſenſe, of a Divine Record. The firſt of theſe being admitted, involves the general admiſſion that *all* it contains is true; the ſecond ſignifies, that the ſpecific meaning, conſcientiouſly attached by the

the mind to any ſpecific paſſage, is ſo; then comes the inevitable conſequence, that anything thus found to be in the Record, however it may ſeem, at firſt, irreconcilable either with reaſon as it exiſts in us, or with our notions of the Divine character, muſt be believed to be abſtractly conſiſtent with both,—with the one as it exiſts in the Divine mind, and with the other as it appears to the Divine contemplation; and that our duty is, either to diſcover, if we can, by frequent and protracted thought, the harmony believed to exiſt between this ſpecific idea and the reſt of truth; or to terminate the fruitleſs inquiry by a devout acknowledgment of the heights and depths of the unfathomable wiſdom, leaving the interpretation of the dark enigma to future communications of knowledge, and a wider range of experience. Proceeding upon theſe principles, it will be found that the two parts of the proceſs juſt deſcribed, do mutually aſſiſt and support each other; that, in proportion as we humbly ſtudy any myſterious ſtatement which we believe to be of God, its firſt aſpect of myſteriouſneſs will contract and diminiſh, and its actual conſiſtency with primitive truths come, in ſome degree, to be perceived; and as this proceeds,—as our knowledge enlarges and our ideas brighten,—we ſhall feel an increaſed and increaſing conviction that it *is* of God. Theſe principles are eaſily applied to the matter before us. Here is the myſterious fact of the univerſal deſtruction of the world by water; you admit the truth of the Record in which it is related; you know that the terms of the Record ſtate its extent, refer it to the dreadful depravity of the ſpecies, and connect it with the preſervation of diſtinguiſhed virtue; looking at it, humbly and ſeriouſly, in all its bearings, it will not be difficult, perhaps, to learn the leſſons which it teaches, either of the character of God or of humility to man.

Permit me farther to remark, that Chriſtian inſtruction to a Chriſtian ſociety, always pre-ſuppoſes the firſt ſtep in the above proceſs; it takes for granted both the truth of the Record and the truth of the characteriſtic interpretation of the aſſembled

ſect.

ſect. At times, the argumentative defence and development of either may be proper, for the conviction of unbelievers or the benefit of the body, but, in general, they are legitimately and neceſſarily aſſumed; for it would be obviouſly abſurd,—as abſurd, in fact, as it is unreaſonable in expectance,—that we ſhould, every time we aſſemble, re-eſtabliſh admitted principles, lay again the very foundation on which, as a ſociety, we ſtand, and turn the hours devoted to improvement into a ſeaſon of unprofitable debate, before we dared to uſe our materials, the facts and ſentiments of our faith, to the ultimate purpoſes they are intended to ſerve. Such a courſe would be eſpecially improper in a ſeries like this of practical exhortations, in which the very object is, to addreſs thoſe who are "grounded and ſettled" in the belief of the Record, and to urge them, by admitted examples, to the higher diſplay of the force and fruits of their own principles. That there has been a deluge, connected not merely with the natural but the moral hiſtory of our world, you and I believe, becauſe we believe that God has ſaid ſo. *There*, with us, all argument ends. We require nothing farther to confirm our faith. Our buſineſs is to improve the *fact* to the excitement of devotion and the advancement of virtue. Yet, admitting all this, it may not be improper to advert, for a moment, to two or three topics, tending, irreſpective of Revelation, to ſhow the probability of a deluge reſembling the Moſaic.

2.

THE deluge is ſtated by Moſes to have occurred between four and five thouſand years ago. This date, extending as it ſeems into a vaſt antiquity when compared with the life of man, is comparatively recent when contraſted with the diſtant creation or eternity of the world. Mankind are repreſented as having then re-commenced from a ſingle family, and progreſſively expanded over the face of the earth. This account ſeems to be corroborated by the general hiſtory of nations. Their

Their origin and eſtabliſhment are ſubſequent to this period. No records on which dependence can be placed reach higher or ſo high. The annals of authentic hiſtory,—the time when it can be ſaid that ancient communities became numerous or formidable; when they extended their limits, planted colonies, refined their manners, and formed their literature; the known riſe of the arts and ſciences, and the late periods of uſeful inventions; all tend to confine our attention *within* the date to which we have referred. The world muſt either have been created about that time,—or it muſt then have begun to be inhabited,—or man, having lived for ages or from eternity in a ſtate of unvaried barbariſm, muſt ſuddenly have become civilized and active,—or his reſidence muſt have undergone ſome great change, by which ſociety, though organized and advanced, was thrown back again, reduced to its firſt elements, and compelled to re-commence its hiſtory and its progreſſion: for, had not the one or the other of theſe, or ſomething of a like nature, actually occurred, or been the caſe, we muſt ſuppoſe that the annals of the ſpecies would have been very different from what they are, both in their number and their contents. It thus ſeems that the Moſaic date, not of the creation but of the deluge, is that, far within which profane hiſtory is confined, and to the correctness of which as, in one ſenſe, the beginning of the ſpecies, ſhe thus gives her effective though tacit teſtimony.

The idea that comes next to this, advances us a ſtep farther. It ſelects, as it were, from the previous ſuppoſitions of what muſt have occurred about the date of the deluge, that one which is the aſſerted truth of the Moſaic Hiſtory, and to this it gives its ſpecific corroboration. We refer to the fact, that the earth bears upon itſelf the viſible evidences of the operation of water. Upon this truth it would be ſuperfluous to expatiate. It is admitted and unqueſtionable. In all parts of the world,—at every height in elevated regions, and at every depth from the ſurface,—are proofs diſcovered of the fact. Marine productions

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are met with every where. Depoſits and formations which could only have been made by the preſence of the ſea; appearances which could reſult from nothing but the univerſal diffuſion of the aqueous element; are among the ordinary and obtruding phenomena of terreſtrial exiſtences. Nothing in the whole circle of ſcience is ſo unequivocally eſtabliſhed as this. All nature riſes, as it were, to afford evidence in ſupport of the aſſertion. Her language is intelligible, loud, univerſal, diſtinct. Interrogate her, as you pleaſe, in any place or in any manner, ſhe returns a ſimilar reply. A perſon may as well refuſe to credit the daily teſtimony of the ſenſes, as that which proceeds from the phyſical appearances of the world in behalf of a general inundation.

A third topic conveys us a ſtep farther than this. It gives ſpecific *moral* characteriſtics to the general and phyſical fact, and thus accumulates around it a number of ideas, which are found to poſſeſs a moſt remarkable coincidence with the principal particulars of the ſacred ſtory. The evidence to which we now refer is that of univerſal tradition. There are, if we may ſo ſpeak, numerous marks and veſtiges left by the deluge upon the *mind* of the ſpecies, juſt as there are the marks laſt enumerated left upon the *globe*. Theſe are to be found in confuſed hiſtorical recollections; in the inſtitutions of religion; in mythological fables; and ſometimes even in the ſpeculations of philoſophy. No nation has been found, in which traces of this kind, conſtituting a traditionary remembrance of the fact, are not to be diſcovered. Whereſoever you find men, you find ſome detail or other of a diſaſtrous and deſtructive flood, by which all but their remote anceſtors, the root of the nation, were deſtroyed. You find, too, among their deities, the repreſentation of ſome god in connection with water; in connection with a ſhip, or ark, or veſſel, rudely and confuſedly indeed, but ſtill obviouſly referring to the Moſaic account. The uniformity of the traditions reſpecting thoſe who eſcaped, is poſitively aſtoniſhing. Wherever you find them at all particular, and you find

find this often, they agree, in many and important points, with each other and with us. It is always one family, and only one. It is never ſaid to have been by accident, but as the reſult of Divine protection, and the reward of diſtinguiſhed virtue. It is always by means of a veſſel, and not merely by gaining ſome elevated height. And the occaſion of the calamity is invariably repreſented, as the anger of the gods excited by the wickedneſs of a degenerate age. Traditions of this nature, involving, with different degrees of diſtinction, the record of an extraordinary event of a ſpecific character, in the former hiſtory of the world, are to be met with in almoſt every country. Every effect muſt have a cauſe; a number of common or ſimilar effects, muſt have a ſimilar or common cauſe; effects like theſe muſt be accounted for, and we know not how that can be conſiſtently done, without referring them all to the ſame origin, and making that origin an actual occurrence.

What we have thus rapidly adverted to, is but the mere outline of what might have been advanced; and that only of two or three topics, out of ſeveral that could legitimately have been brought into the argument. Theſe, however, are ſufficient for our purpoſe. They ſhow that there *are* teſtimonies diſtinct from revelation, by which that of revelation is corroborated and confirmed; that the denial of the Scriptures may involve the denial of more than is imagined; that the principle of reſiſtance to the Divine Record may be as unphiloſophical as it is impious, and might lead, if conſiſtently carried out, to the rejection of all hiſtory, and almoſt of the grounds of phyſical ſcience. At any rate, it muſt be admitted to be a ſeries of moſt ſingular coincidences, that authentic hiſtory ſhould be limited within the date of the deluge rather than the creation; that the fabrications of the Bible ſhould be ſo fortunate as to include both; that they ſhould firſt ſuggeſt that, which ſeems to be required by uncorrupted reaſon, and then that, which beſt interprets phyſical appearances;—that all nations ſhould unite, as it were, in one vaſt conſpiracy, to ſupport the falſehood and deceive

deceive each other;—that unſcientific and ignorant men ſhould have anticipated the diſtant diſcoveries of ſcience;—and that the ſenſible monuments of nature ſhould ſeem to be inſcribed with the lie of the religioniſt. The language of nature, indeed, is ſaid to go farther than that of revelation, and to ſpeak of a larger ſupremacy of the deſtructive element than is ſtated by the Record; but this part of her evidence, we believe, may be more eaſily reconciled with the account of the hiſtorian, than thoſe particulars which ſupport the hiſtorian, can be reconciled with the principles of a ſceptical philoſophy.

3.

WE advance from theſe preliminary obſervations, to the direct conſideration of the faith of Noah. This we ſhall attempt to exhibit in a ſeries of remarks illuſtrative of the facts of the hiſtory and the character of the man. It is our purpoſe, after this, to explain, in a number of inferences, ſuch general principles as the circumſtance of the deluge ſeems to involve, reſpecting the whole of the Divine character and government.

The firſt thing to be obſerved in the contemplation of this ſubject, is the *occaſion* of the univerſal cataſtrophe,—the *moral cauſe* which impelled the Divine Being to ſuch a ſignal demonſtration of his diſpleaſure. The language of the hiſtorian, in relation to this, is very remarkable. His expreſſions, both literal and figurative, are diſtinguiſhed by ſuch a depth and intenſity, and ſome of them are ſo frequently repeated, as to indicate, if the language may be allowed, the peculiar and ſtrong excitement of the Sovereign Mind. God is repreſented as looking down from heaven, "the habitation of his holineſs," to ſurvey the earth which he had made; that earth, which was welcomed at firſt by the ſong of angelic gratulation; which he looked upon himſelf with paternal pleaſure, as, riſing, beautiful and perfect from the maze of primitive confuſion, he pronounced it "good." God looked down upon it to obſerve the condition

condition and the character of him whom he had conſtituted its lord; who was formed in his own image, diſtinguiſhed by high capacities, and inveſted with attributes of greatneſs. In the pleaſurable anticipations of the preceding eternity, when contemplating his own "idea" of the projected world, "he had rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the ſons of men;" but now, looking on the ſpecies in its living reality, he beheld its utter and univerſal degradation; he witneſsed the perverſion of intellect, the violation of purity, the extinction of every thing originally great; and, loathing, as it were, his own work, "he REPENTED that he had made man upon the earth." What an expreſſion is this, my brethren! "*It repented God that he had made man.*" Man, the laſt and moſt perfect offspring of creative energy;—man, who was the product, ſo to ſpeak, of the Divine "counſel," as well as power,—to whom the inſpiration of the Almighty had given underſtanding; whoſe faculties were ſo admirable, whoſe capabilities were ſo various, whoſe deſtination was ſo auguſt; ſo utterly debaſed had he become,—he, on whom ſuch ſkill had been expended,—that the very Being who raiſed the ſtructure and beautified it with all its embelliſhments, "*repented*" himſelf of the act. We know that this is a phraſe which cannot be received in its literal acceptation; but we may judge by it of the occaſion which demanded ſuch a bold, and almoſt unnatural alluſion to our perſonal experience, to convey any thing like an adequate idea of thoſe myſterious emotions, with which Deity contemplated the depth of human degradation.

The impreſſion, however, produced by this language, though deep, is indefinite. It requires ſomething leſs general ſufficiently to affect us. The figure, indeed, indicates the enormous reſults conſequent on the apoſtacy, by attributing to them ſuch an effect upon the mind of God; but, in itſelf, it conveys nothing as to their ſpecific characteriſtics, as to what they *were* in relation to man. But this is done in other paſſages which deſcend to particulars; which trace the poiſon infuſed into the

moral

moral ſyſtem by the primitive ſin, in all the variety and extent of its malignant operations. There are *three* phraſes employed for this purpoſe, each of them remarkably expreſſive; each proceeding in the deſcription farther than the other; and all, when combined, conſtituting an appalling picture of unmitigated turpitude. It is ſaid, FIRST, "*that the thoughts and the imaginations of man's heart were only evil continually.*" THEN, "*that all fleſh had corrupted its way.*" And LASTLY, "*that the earth was filled with violence.*" Let theſe different repreſentations be regarded as parts of one whole; let them be united by the imagination, and conſidered thus as comprehending the character of the ſpecies; and nothing will be wanting to complete the idea of a ſtate of ſociety diſtinguiſhed by the total extinction of every thing like virtue.—In theſe phraſes we have, firſt, the perverſion of the intellect and the heart; and that, too, depicted with the qualities of univerſality and permanence. "*The thoughts and imaginations of man's heart are only evil continually.*" Death, ſpiritually ſpeaking, ſeems to haye ſeized and corrupted the very ſources of life. The operations of the mind were imbued with evil. The judgment was employed in adopting and defending error; the affections in cheriſhing the deſires of univerſal ſelfiſhneſs; the memory in the complacent recollection of ſcenes of guilt; and the imagination in combining images of impurity.—Such internal diſorder among the moral faculties, was naturally productive of practical miſchief. "*All fleſh corrupted its way.*" The word "way," in Scripture, ſignifies, what we mean by a *courſe* of conduct,—the obſervable and permanent habits of the life. Upon this, in the men of the former world, the ſtate of their minds produced the moſt diſaſtrous reſults. It "*corrupted*" their way. It extinguiſhed the ſenſe of moral obligation; it ſapped the honour of public character; it poiſoned the ſources of ſocial enjoyment; it deſtroyed the foundation of private virtue; it diſrobed men at once of the decent and the dignified.—Nor was this all. Another and terrible figure is to be introduced into the picture. "*The earth was*

was filled with violence." You are to add the operation of the *malignant* paſſions to the blaſphemies of a perverted intellect, and the exceſſes of unreſtrained ſenſuality. It is not till this is done that you obtain the entire conception conveyed by the whole of the ſacred teſtimony. "The earth was filled with violence." The world, intended to be the ſeat of moral order, was transformed into a vaſt theatre of confuſion. The claſhings of intereſt, the colliſion of parties, the lawleſſneſs of oppreſſion, the graſpings of eager cupidity, the indignant retaliation of ſuppoſed or inflicted wrong, with all the numberleſs ſources of ſocial diſcord, appear to have operated then, with a more fearful malignity than they have operated ſince. There is no expreſs mention of war; but we cannot doubt that man's wicked ingenuity diſcovered, long before the flood, this infernal method of gratifying ſelfiſhneſs and acquiring diſtinction. War muſt have been inevitable, we ſhould think, from the ſtate of ſociety; it ſeems neceſſarily involved in the ſcriptural terms. The example of Cain was no doubt ſpeedily followed on an extended ſcale. While private animoſities became frequent, aggravated and prolonged, accident might occaſion, or the revenge of ſome commanding character ſuggeſt, the encounter of numbers. This would ſoon excite the ambition of becoming "men of renown;" would lead to the conſtruction of inſtruments and the niceties of diſcipline; and would terminate, at laſt, in the ſplendid enormities of the aſſembled field and the ſanguinary conflict. Not only was there war, indeed, among the antediluvians, but it was accompanied, I imagine, with circumſtances of atrocity and deeds of violence, to which, in the ſight of God, ſucceeding times have never yet furniſhed a parallel. Thus, the language of Scripture in relation to the *moral cauſe* of the deluge, is obſerved to be remarkably expreſſive. When we collect its various repreſentations, and contemplate their united amount, we ſee that human nature was univerſally deformed by gigantic excreſcences of impiety and crime; and we wonder not that Infinite Perfection ſhould determine to diſburden his

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own world, by lifting up his arm in anger, and ſweeping them for ever from the earth.

He determined to do this. He communicated his intentions to Noah; commiſſioned him to warn the world of the impending deſtruction; and to prepare an ark for the ſaving of his houſe. In the obedience of the patriarch to theſe ſeveral directions, faith was eminently conſpicuous. To the illuſtration of the principle, as exerciſed in connection with this event, we ſhall immediately paſs. It will be proper, however, to make a previous remark on the ſcriptural deſcription of Noah's general character, which will evince the propriety of limiting our attention to this one act for which he is celebrated.

This remarkable individual, who ultimately formed, as it were, the link between two worlds, was diſtinguiſhed from his original contemporaries, by diametrically oppoſite principles and purſuits. He is ſaid, like Enoch, to have "walked with God;" to have entertained the conceptions, cultivated the devotion, and practiſed the virtues implied by the phraſe. He is alſo deſcribed as "perfect" in his generation; a term employed in the Old Teſtament to expreſs unbending rectitude, uncorrupted integrity. Like Simeon, he was "a juſt man and a devout;" epithets which appear to expreſs an acquaintance with the principles, and the poſſeſſion of a degree, of univerſal virtue,—the union of religious attainment, and the emanations of practical excellence. Such was Noah. And he was ſuch *alone*;—ſuch, though ſurrounded by corrupting examples,—by every form of impiety, oppreſſion, luxury, and fraud.

—— "faithful only found
Among the faithleſs."

As his general character reſembled ſo remarkably that of Enoch, our former remarks on *his* faith, as the ſource of all his holy acquiſitions, might be repeated here, as they would equally

equally apply to that of his deſcendant. The principle in one or other of its forms is that to which all excellence is ſcripturally aſcribed. Having already, however, largely illuſtrated the general truth, our buſineſs is neceſſarily limited, in the preſent caſe, to the mode of its diſplay in that one act, for which the ſecond father of mankind is diſtinguiſhed in the church.

4.

1. NOAH was warned of God reſpecting a matter altogether unprecedented; "a thing not ſeen as yet." He had no experience to aſſiſt his belief; no knowledge of any correſponding diſplays of the Divine character to which he could advert, and, by contemplating which, reaſon might be able to facilitate faith. An unqualified conviction of Supreme rectitude, and a perfect perſuaſion of preſiding goodneſs, were required of the patriarch, under circumſtances apparently incompatible with both. This conſtituted his firſt trial. There are two ways in which it might be felt; in which unbelief might have reſiſted the ſtupendous announcement; occaſioned his rejection of the Divine teſtimony; and rendered him "diſobedient to the heavenly viſion."—We know nothing of the time, the manner, or the place, ſelected for the communication of the aſtounding intelligence. It is an allowable liberty, however, to conceive that it might be at the hour of worſhip—at the period when the prophet indulged his pious philanthropy by interceſſion for his "brethren according to the fleſh." The place was, probably, a ſacred eminence, where he had devoutly erected an altar for ſacrifice; where he ſpent many a ſeaſon of fellowſhip with heaven; and *from* which he might be able to ſurvey cities and palaces ſurrounded by the grandeurs of the primitive earth,—the combined exhibitions of the achievements of man, and the opulence of nature. Conceive this. Conceive the "man of God" ſo ſituated, when his attention

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is arreſted by the Divine voice, and when, as at other times, he liſtens for ſome communication from the "holy oracle," that ſhall enlarge his knowledge or purify his joy;—and imagine, if you can, what would be his feelings, when he firſt underſtood the "burden of the Lord," and formed a diſtinct conception of the threatened cataſtrophe. He would be penetrated and abſorbed by conflicting emotions. They would be thoſe of aſtoniſhment, heſitation, and doubt. "*Can* this be the voice of God? Is it not rather a diabolical ſuggeſtion, intended to excite diſhonourable thoughts, and lead to the blaſphemy of his name? It is true, the wickedneſs of man is great; but ſuch mighty multitudes exiſt,—ſo vaſt muſt be the worth of thoſe proſpective immortals! ſo glorious would be their recovery and return to God! and to effect this, muſt be within the power of the Supreme!—Their deſtruction—their utter and univerſal deſtruction! ſurely this can never be contemplated by 'the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh.'—And this earth,—the work of his own hand, adorned by his own bounty, filled with every form of the wonderful and the fair,—*this* to be deſtroyed!—It cannot be.—'Wherefore ſhould he have made all men, and all things in vain?'" Again. The faith of Noah might encounter another obſtacle; unbelief might betray itſelf by different doubts;—"All the families of the earth to be expoſed to the threatened doom, and *mine* only excepted! Who am I, to be judged worthy this awful diſtinction? The *mercy* appears as improbable as the *wrath*. Some illuſion is operating which I cannot comprehend. It can neither be the voice of Him who is 'full of compaſſion,' nor of Him, whom, alas! I have ſo frequently offended."—Suggeſtions of each claſs might certainly ariſe in the mind of Noah. I have no doubt that many of them did. But his faith enabled him to repel them. It led him to believe, however difficult to nature, what he felt convinced it was God that ſaid; and it led him to expect, however wonderful the mercy, what he was equally convinced that God

God had promiſed; and this faith—"this perfect perſuaſion of a thing not ſeen, and this confident expectation of a thing hoped for,"—was evinced by appropriate proofs in his ſubſequent behaviour; by his actual attention to the erection of the ark, and his entrance within it for the ſalvation of his houſe.

The faith of Noah was thus primarily manifeſted by a reverential "fear" of the "great and dreadful God;" a belief of the Divine threatenings, leading to the preparation of the means of ſafety. Faith, in the ſimple and practical view we are attempting to take, conſiſts, you perceive, in a regard to the *whole* of the Divine teſtimony, to whatever that teſtimony relates. If, for example, the truth, ſpecifically contemplated, be a ſimple intellectual announcement, faith is the acquieſcence of the underſtanding in its abſolute certainty. If it be a promiſe of good, faith is confidence in its fulfilment. If it be a threatening of evil, combined as all threatenings are with the merciful proviſion of a method of eſcape, faith is apprehenſion concurring with flight to the appointed refuge. It was thus that it firſt operated in the mind of Noah.

2. Another illuſtration of the power of faith, as ſeen in the conduct of the patriarch, may be taken from his perſevering attention to the ſtructure of the ark, and his conſequent continued warning of the world.

God never brought a judgment upon any nation without previous, diſtinct, and intelligible warnings. This is a principle of the Divine government, illuſtrated by the whole hiſtory of the church and the world. Lot warned Sodom; the Iſraelites, Egypt; their prophets, the Iſraelites; Jonah, Nineveh; Jeſus and his apoſtles, Jeruſalem and Judea. And thus Noah, both by his actual declaration of the "word of the Lord," and his building in the view of the people the veſſel of ſafety, teſtified the Divine intentions, and warned the world of the "coming wrath." The perſeverance of the prophet amid the complicated oppoſition which he had unqueſ-

tionably to ſuſtain, evinces his unqualified confidence in the truth of God, and his uncommon vigour of principle and purpoſe. The work itſelf, which he was commanded to perform, required immenſe labour, and occupied many years. In the courſe of this time, ſubject, as he certainly was, to the fluctuating feelings of our common nature, many might be the doubts, and painful the ſuſpicions, which his faith had to encounter and expel. The abſence of all impreſſion from his preaching, though accompanied, perhaps, with agonizing emotion; the apathy of a thoughtleſs, or the contempt of an incredulous, age; the rejection of his meſſage, and the ridicule of his fears; might all concur to repreſs his ardour, and conſtitute a ſevere teſt of his fidelity. That he was thus tried from without, by the conduct of men, and in a variety of ways, appears to me not only probable but certain. I doubt not that he was inceſſantly inſulted,—ſcouted as a fanatic or a madman, for ſpending his time upon that which, it would be ſaid, could never be of any uſe but to perpetuate his folly. It is generally ſuppoſed that arts and ſciences were cultivated to a conſiderable extent by the antediluvians. Nature, at any rate, would be as bountiful and as unreſtrained as at preſent, in conferring original capacity; or, perhaps, in her youthful achievements and primeval communications, ſhe reached a ſtandard and beſtowed with a munificence which has never been repeated. There were then, I imagine, perſons diſtinguiſhed by every form of intellect and genius; there was native power and acquired perfection; there were poets, architects, philoſophers, and other and brilliant modifications of mind, as we have them now; and every one of them, I can ſuppoſe, exerted their peculiar acuteneſs, and combined their ſeparate ability, to pour contempt upon the man of God. When the matter was ſufficiently known to become a topic of general converſation, crowds of perſons would aſſemble to look at the work as it advanced, and to laugh at the labour and the apprehenſions of the patriarch. One would ridicule its form and dimenſions;

dimenſions; another the abſurdity of a ſhip upon a mountain; the philoſopher might demonſtrate the phyſical impoſſibility of the predicted fact; and the poet might exerciſe his wit in contemptuous ballads on the doting enthuſiaſt. All this I think likely; and to ſuſtain it all, year after year,—to preach without ſucceſs,—to oppoſe apparently the intelligence as well as the frivolity of the age,—to act only to become a by-word and a jeſt,—this would require a faith of no ordinary character; and Noah's actual perſeverance, in defiance of it all, proved *his* to be diſtinguiſhed by incomparable ſtrength.

3. The laſt circumſtance from which we illuſtrate the faith of Noah, is the calm confidence with which he committed himſelf to the Supreme protection, at the time of the actual cataſtrophe. It is true, this confidence would be greatly encouraged by two circumſtances,—by the miraculous approach of many animals to the ark, and the commenced infliction of the threatening judgment. Both of theſe would aſſure him that he had not been deluded by imaginary impreſſions. There was ſtill, however, a demand for firm and ſteady faith, as, at the moment of firſt entering upon danger, we often experience miſgivings, which in proſpect we anticipate not. After his protracted trials of another kind, *this moment* arrived to Noah. He was called to the commitment of himſelf to the Divine diſpoſal, in a way which none had ever been called before. His work was finiſhed,—his teſtimony given,—the world and himſelf were about to witneſs the truth or falſehood of his perſonal predictions. I know not but that a rabble attended his entrance into the ark, and ſhouted defiance to his warnings, and taunted him with the neceſſity he would ſoon find, of leaving his romantic retreat, and returning to the very ſame ſcenes he had been dooming to deſtruction. But he perſevered,—too ſenſibly perſuaded both of the faithfulneſs of God and the infatuation of mankind. "He entered the ark," ſays the hiſtorian, "and the Lord *ſhut him in.*" What a moment muſt that have been! What a feeling muſt

have ſucceeded this act of ſecurity! "*The Lord ſhut him in.*" What a new and indefinable ſenſation muſt then have abſorbed his mind! He had taken his laſt look of the world and man; he was now, if we may ſo ſpeak, ſenſibly ſuſpended upon Deity. The windows of heaven and the fountains of the deep were opened; the elements deſcended, and the waters advanced; now, perhaps, numbers of thoſe who had rejected his teſtimony were heard crowding to the ark, expreſſing penitence and imploring aid, when it was too late; at length, one by one, the voices were huſhed; the water was perceived to prevail,—to deſtroy each individual as he became too weak to grapple with their force,—till, riſing over all, extinguiſhing for ever their importunity,—diffuſing the ſilence of death,—and lifting the ark from her foundations,—the prophet would feel the increaſing neceſſity of reliance upon God, as he felt left alone amid the ruins of nature, abandoned to the agitated element, in danger of being toſſed by contending currents, or daſhed upon ſome yet uncovered elevation.

Discourse VI.

Principles and Leſſons illuſtrated by the Hiſtory and Faith of Noah.

HEB. xi. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe: by the which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

HAVING already attempted the expoſition of this paſſage, by adverting to the cauſe and circumſtances of the deluge, and by illuſtrating the faith of Noah as connected with that event; we proceed to deduce thoſe general leſſons and inferences, which the whole ſubject ſeems calculated to ſuggeſt.

I.

IN the firſt place; we are reminded by this ſubject of one of the great ſources of unbelief in the facts and doctrines of Divine revelation. Many of theſe facts are miraculous, and

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many of the doctrines partake more or leſs of a myſterious character. Some pretend, that, from this very circumſtance, the rejection of both, by them at leaſt, is inevitable. This ariſes, they affirm, from cauſes which they cannot control; over which they have no power; whoſe operation involves no reſponſibility. The neceſſary laws of the human mind render it incapable, it is ſaid, of admitting what is repugnant to its primitive perceptions; and ſubjects diſtinguiſhed by the above properties are held to be ſuch. In this way, many, we believe, have impoſed both upon themſelves and others, as if with reluctance they rejected, in conſequence of a commanding neceſſity, a ſyſtem of principles "worthy of all acceptation." It may be urged, however, *in general*, that reaſon, legitimately exerciſed, would ſeem to expect, in connection with Divine communications, ſomething both of miracle and myſtery;—of myſtery, becauſe it might be preſumed, that revelation, like nature, would have its ultimate facts, beyond which it is impoſſible to penetrate; and that Divine ideas conveyed in human language might contract ſome obſcurity from the imperfection of the vehicle:—of miracle, becauſe, admitting the fact of a revelation at all, it is only by miracle that it can either be imparted or proved; it is only by ſomething altogether different from our uſual experience, that a communication with Deity can be held, or the reality of ſuch communication ſatisfactorily demonſtrated. It would ſeem, therefore, that it is not in the alleged unreaſonableneſs of either of theſe that the ſource of infidelity is to be ſought, but in ſomething elſe, which belongs more to moral diſpoſition than to intellectual capacity.

Theſe obſervations, bearing upon the elementary facts and principles of our faith, may be illuſtrated by that particular fact, with which the name of Noah is connected. The kind of illuſtration to which we refer, is furniſhed by St. Peter, in a paſſage which has ſuggeſted the remark. Deſcribing certain ſcoffers and infidels, he repreſents them as ridiculing the thought of

of the world's ultimate deſtruction, and defending their unbelief by referring to the regular operations of nature, which, they aſſert, have never been diſturbed. "Where is the promiſe of his coming?"—that is, 'Where is the *reaſonableneſs* of ſuch an event? It has nothing to ſupport it,—nothing to enhance its probability in any thing we ſee; it is oppoſed in fact by the voice of the univerſe itſelf; for, "ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Seeing, then, that the movements of this ſyſtem have never yet been interrupted,—we have our own experience, and that of antiquity,—the evidence of daily obſervation,—the reſiſtleſs demonſtration of the ſenſes,—to aſſure us that they are not likely to be interrupted at all; hence, we cannot *but* reject the predicted occurrence; the neceſsary laws of the human mind compel our unbelief; we are thus *rationally incapacitated* for receiving the miraculous abſurdity, attempted to be impoſed upon our credulous reception.'

Such is the complete ſenſe involved in the language of the men to whom Peter refers. In their own opinion, they could not help believing and diſbelieving juſt as they did; in doing ſo, they pretended to be following, with philoſophic conſiſtency, the ſimple ſuggeſtions of reaſon and nature. But how does the Apoſtle account for their unbelief? To what does *he* refer this "rational incapacity" to admit the anticipated miracle? "This," ſays he, "they WILLINGLY are ignorant of, that the heavens and the earth were of old, and that the earth which then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed." "*This they willingly are ignorant of.*" Here is the diſcovery of a circumſtance connected with their argumentative objection, which expoſes at once its inherent weakneſs, and the moral culpability in which it originated. They argue againſt the probability of a certain occurrence, by pleading their ignorance of any ſimilar event. The objection is groundleſs, ſays the Apoſtle, becauſe it aſſumes a falſehood,—the very thing they ſpeak of having actually taken place. They profeſs to be ignorant of it,—that ignorance, however,

however, cannot but be voluntary; this ſtate of the intellect is the reſult of a criminal determination of the will; the underſtanding has been perverted by the moral affections; they have forgotten or neglected the means of knowledge; "*they* WILLINGLY *are ignorant.*" Their ſin and their ſophiſtry are ſeen in this,—they firſt ſhut their eyes againſt evidence by which even *their* minds would have been impreſſed; they then plead the ignorance ariſing from the want of it, as neceſſarily inducing the rejection of the truth; and they prepoſterouſly imagine that this ignorance, which occaſions the incapacity of belief, conſtitutes an argumentative vindication of their profeſſed infidelity, when, in fact, *being itſelf a crime*, it only evinces and aggravates its turpitude.

Such is the explanation of the Apoſtle, and ſuch is the principal cauſe of moſt of the infidelity in the world. It is not ſo much a want, as a willing oblivion, of evidence. There is voluntary negligence in collecting and conſidering it, ariſing from internal oppoſition to the *thing to be eſtabliſhed.* "Men do not *like* to retain God in their knowledge." They have a moral diſtaſte to the truth itſelf; and they attempt to juſtify their unbelief by referring *that* to the laws of the intellect, which only proceeds from the ſtate of the affections. That this was the caſe with the men ſpoken of by Peter, is obvious from what has been remarked; and they are deſcribed, probably, for the very purpoſe of furniſhing an illuſtration of the ſeminal principle of all unbelief. They *argued*, indeed, as if the operations of the intellect were alone encouraged, and as if, over them, Reaſon, in all her power and purity, preſided. Their whole argument, however, it is worthy obſervation, proceeds upon *two* very illogical aſſumptions. The *one* has already been conſidered. Apart from its moral character, (the light in which it is viewed by the Apoſtle, and in which, hitherto, we have excluſively regarded it,) it conſiſts in taking that for granted which is not proved. The *other* conſiſts in employing a *kind* of argument unſuitable to the ſubject. Admit the truth of their objection,—admit "that all things have continued

tinued as they were from the beginning of the world," and *what then?* Is that ſufficient to prove that they will for ever remain ſo? Is nothing to occur in the univerſe but what has occurred before? Is God never to do but what he *has* done? If this be a principle with Him, it muſt always have been ſuch; it muſt have been ſuch before creation began; and if it had, it would have prevented it, for there was then no precedent for his forming worlds, as there is now ſaid to be none for his deſtroying them. The fact is, this was not the point in diſpute. The queſtion concerned the truth of a certain teſtimony. The matter was to be tried, therefore, by the law of evidence, and not by analogical preſumptions. The men, announcing the event, did ſo, they affirmed, in obedience to the command of God; they pretended to hold with him ſupernatural intercourſe, and they profeſſed to afford ſatisfactory, becauſe ſupernatural, proofs of the fact. The point was *to examine theſe proofs*,—to inveſtigate their reality and force,—and then to determine the credibility of the announcement. This was the only legitimate and logical courſe. The mode of argument actually adopted, would do in oppoſing the opinions of a philoſopher, but not in oppoſing thoſe of an apoſtle. The one is a *ſpeculation*, the other is *teſtimony*. The one, therefore, we may reject from ſpeculative preſumptions; the other we may be compelled to acknowledge even in ſpite of them.

Theſe diſtinctions, important as they unqueſtionably are, were forgotten by the perſons deſcribed by St. Peter. They were forgotten by them in relation to a ſubject which they diſliked, and which came with pretenſions to Divine authority. Had it been ſomething gratifying to "men of corrupt minds," their reaſonings would probably have been ſounder; or had they been inveſtigating a matter in a court of juſtice, their acuteneſs would hardly have ſuffered ſo degrading an eclipſe. In either caſe they would have perceived that the ſubject was not to be diſmiſſed, becauſe nothing ſimilar had been ſubmitted to them before; but they would have tried the matter on its

own

own merits, examined the evidence produced in its ſupport, and arrived at a juſt concluſion from employing an appropriate mode of inquiry. This they would have done in ſecular concerns, becauſe in theſe there was nothing to excite their moral feeling, and to lead it to pervert and bias the judgment. But this there *is* in the truth of God. The hoſtility of the heart to ſpiritual purity will often betray itſelf, by leading men to impoſe upon themſelves in the *rational* and *philoſophical* manner deſcribed by the Apoſtle! It will permit them to employ ſuch unfairneſs of argument, or to be taken captive by ſuch flimſy ſophiſtry, as, in relation to other ſubjects, they would utterly ridicule and reject. It is the ſtate of the heart, then, that needs moſt to be altered. When the moral feelings are changed,—when the heart is impreſſed with the importance, and ſincerely deſirous of being governed by moral truth,—then is the ſtrongeſt intrenchment of infidelity demoliſhed, and the ſureſt foundation laid for cordial belief: for, "whoever wiſhes to do the will of my Father, ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf."

2.

FROM the fact of the deluge we may learn how to conceive aright of the Divine character.

There is a tendency in ſome perſons to indulge in very partial ſpeculations on the Divine character. They are not diſpoſed to contemplate the whole of it. They are ſatisfied with a very defective induction, when profeſſing to collect the particulars and to interpret the facts by which it is diſplayed. In ſurveying the univerſe, for inſtance, they ſelect the grand and the beautiful, the lovely and the fair; they are enraptured with all that enkindles genius or delights ſenſibility; riſing from theſe to the contemplation of the Creator, they inveſt him with excluſively correſponding attributes; they think of nothing but the wiſdom, the benignity, and the tenderneſs, which ſuch ſcenes

ſcenes appear to illuſtrate; and thus they form for themſelves the idea of a being diſtinguiſhed by a few attractive perfections, whoſe character may excite admiration or impart pleaſure, but includes nothing to agitate or awe. The ſame principle, which leads them to overlook one claſs of phenomena in the univerſe, by which the character of Deity is drawn, alſo leads them to overlook one claſs of repreſentations in the Bible, by which the character of Deity is deſcribed. Fixing upon the paſſages which ſpeak of his love, his compaſſion and his mercy,—which attribute to him the tenderneſs of a father or the munificence of a prince,—they forget the other paſſages which ſpeak of the claims of the ſovereign and the functions of the judge,—which exhibit his determined oppoſition to evil, and threaten the outpouring of the vials of wrath. By this ſyſtematic oblivion of one half of the Divine character, moſt deluſive and dangerous notions are engendered. The men are pleaſed with the creation of their own fancy. It preſents them with a God of ſuch placid perfections that no exceſs of iniquity ſeems ſufficient to rouſe him. His attributes are excluſively adapted to ſoothe and to tranquillize. They impart conſolation to affliction and confidence to guilt. Guilt, indeed, is hardly aſſociated with humanity at all; error, frailty, or misfortune, are the terms by which ſin is deſcribed; it would be ſhocking to think it could be ſeverely puniſhed; a little phyſical ſuffering, or an expreſſion of *elegant* regret, ſeems capable of blotting it out for ever!

Now, theſe partial and dangerous delineations of Deity are ſeen to be ſuch, when we look at the moral aſpect of the deluge. He that could intentionally deſtroy all fleſh becauſe all fleſh had corrupted its way, was no palliating obſerver of iniquity, no gentle excuſer of crime. *This* God muſt have been very different from the amiable idol of a falſe philoſophy or a deceitful ſentimentaliſm. There muſt have been ſomething of the awful about him as well as the attractive. Something of the ſtrong and the ſtern of character, as well as the indulgent.

indulgent. Something that regarded ſin with ſeverity, and allowed not that his creatures ſhould for ever trifle with the commands of his law or the expreſſions of his love. All the faſcinating deſcriptions of the poet,—all the flimſy reaſonings of the pretended philoſopher,—all the partial expoſitions of the ſemi-theologian,—all theſe are falſified by the fact, which ſpeaks of a period in the hiſtory of our world when the very forbearance of God was exhauſted,—when his Spirit actually ceaſed to ſtrive with man.

It is thus that the circumſtance of the deluge diſplays a part of the Divine character, which men are diſpoſed to overlook, and recalls us to the juſt conſideration of the whole. The phenomena of nature and the economy of Providence, though inſufficient as excluſive and independent teachers, may both be obſerved beautifully to illuſtrate the various diſcoveries of holy writ. Their reſpective appearances, harmonizing with each other, conſtitute a comment on the "ſayings of God," embodying, as it were, in palpable facts, the abſtract ſtatements of inſpired men. No claſs either of the facts or the ſtatements can be conſiſtently or ſafely neglected. The moſt appalling may be ſalutary; for, though they may diſſipate the dreams of deluſive and indulgent ſyſtems, they prevent our repoſing on a "broken reed," and impel us to flee to the only foundation. They keep us from imagining that the moral concerns of God's great empire are conducted upon principles ſo indiſcriminately benevolent, and therefore ſo unjuſt, as, if adopted in human governments, would render them at once uſeleſs and contemptible.

3.

HE who has already once judged and condemned mankind, may do ſo again.

We have found, by looking at the fact of the deluge, that the attributes of the great Being include the dreadful as well as

as the benignant; that his benevolence is not a weak and blind partiality which overlooks moral diſtinctions, and the extent of which is ſo literally infinite, that its gifts can never be withheld; but that it is a holy and juſt principle, which can actually approve the denunciations of vengeance, and ſanction the outpouring of the vials of wrath. All this we have ſeen to be involved in the fact before us. It is expreſſed, indeed, in words, in various ſcriptural repreſentations of God. But theſe repreſentations are here embodied and realized. We ſee God to *be* what he ſays he *is*—how he *acts* in his conduct as he ſpeaks in his communications. But what God *is*, he muſt ever be. What his perfections permit him to do once, he may do again. What they ſuggeſt and ſanction under certain circumſtances, they may always ſanction when ſuch circumſtances recur. He, therefore, who puniſhed an impenitent world, *may* puniſh an impenitent man. He who has already viſited the depravity of one age, *may* viſit the depravity of another. He is ſtill the ſame God. His character ſtill poſſeſſes the ſame perfection; it ſtill retains its harmony of attributes. His abhorrence of evil is as inveterate as ever; his threatenings againſt it,—his declarations of "a judgment to come,"—his deſcriptions of "the day of the revelation of wrath,"—are as loud,—as intelligible,—as diſtinct; and therefore, it becomes us to liſten to every warning he ſends; to be perſuaded by "the terrors of the Lord;" and to flee from the anticipated vengeance, which will as aſſuredly overwhelm the unbelieving and impenitent, as the former flood the diſobedient ſpirits, "who repented not at the preaching of Noah."

In urging, my brethren, this practical leſſon from the preſent ſubject, we are borne out by apoſtolical authority. It is the very ſentiment which St. Peter enforces by referring to this and ſimilar events. Reaſoning from the unchangeable perfections, the neceſſary and eternal conſiſtency of the Supreme Being,—"*if*," ſays he, "God ſpared not the angels that ſinned; *if* he ſpared not the old world; if he ſpared not the cities

cities of Sodom and Gomorrah;—*then* doth he ſtill know how to reſerve the ungodly to the day of judgment to be puniſhed." And, in the next chapter of the ſame epiſtle, he explicitly ſtates the fact of God's intending to do, what he here ſays he conſiſtently might. "The heavens and the earth are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire, againſt the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Theſe, my brethren, are dreadful declarations. They deſcribe a judgment to come, more terrible than the judgment that is paſt; a period for which we ſhould ever be prepared,—of which we ſhould ſeem to ſtand in inceſſant expectation. "For the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and all that is therein, ſhall be burned up. Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?"—The certainty of the event, and the *un*certainty of the time of its appearance, ſhould concur to quicken watchfulneſs and prayer. It ought not to be with us as our Lord deſcribes it to have been with thoſe who formerly periſhed; "when in the days of Noah, the people ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, and wiſt not till the flood came and took them all away." We, who are ſo repeatedly reminded of the "coming of the Lord," ought to be prepared for the Lord's appearance. He comes virtually to each of us at death. The material univerſe may remain for ages, but *our* deſtiny will ſhortly be determined, "The judge is *near*, even at the door." "The end of all things is *at hand*." "The day *approacheth*." "The coming of the Lord draweth *nigh*." "Wherefore, give all diligence, that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs."

4. In

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IN connection with this awful repreſentation of God, it becomes us to notice the conſolatory and encouraging indications, which the preſent hiſtory includes. It is true, God can do with ſinners as a judge, what he has already done in the ſame character. As he has deſtroyed the world by one element, he can deſtroy it by another. As he has once poured out the fury of his anger, he can, and he will pour it out again. All this is true. But it is alſo true, that, as he provided a refuge in the one caſe, ſo has he alſo provided a refuge in the other;—and one far more ample and capacious,—one that could contain a world, if a world could be perſuaded to enter it. It is true, an inundation more dreadful than the laſt, is ready to ruſh upon the earth; but means of eſcape are prepared commenſurate with the awful emergency. We are addreſſed from heaven by a greater than Noah; we are invited to accept of a greater ſalvation. "The ark of the covenant," containing, ſo to ſpeak, the eternal purpoſes of redeeming love, is ſufficient to ſecure the ſafety of the ſpecies. "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin." The invitation hath gone forth to the whole world, beſeeching all, "without money and without price," to come, and to accept of a free and adequate ſalvation. There is no reaſon for alarm, from reflecting upon thoſe attributes of God, which preſent ſuch an aſpect of ſeverity towards evil and its agents. Theſe have been conſulted in the proviſion which he has made. Their claims have been admitted and their honour ſuſtained. The inſulted majeſty of the law has been ſatisfied, and the *whole* of the Divine character ſo conſiſtently regarded, that "God can be *juſt*, and the *juſtifier* of him that believeth in Jeſus." "Now then we are ambaſſadors for God, as though God did beſeech men by us, we pray men, in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him."

5. In

5.

IN connection with this laſt remark, there is another, and a kindred conſideration, which we ſhall do well repeatedly to weigh. Peter, in his firſt epiſtle, ſpeaks of the longſuffering of God, waiting in the time of Noah while the ark was preparing; his Spirit continuing to "ſtrive" even after the dreadful denunciation was uttered, as if lingering to ſee whether any impreſſion would be made upon the obduracy of man. In his ſecond epiſtle the Apoſtle teaches us, that we ought to regard the continuance of nature and the delay of judgment, as another manifeſtation of the Divine forbearance, and another mode of expreſſing anxiety to ſave. "All things continue as they were;"—yet, "the Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe; but he is longſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance."—Wherefore, "account, that the longſuffering of the Lord is ſalvation,"—that is to ſay,—account, that it is intended to afford you facilities for ſecuring it; to furniſh you with opportunities of "laying hold on eternal life." Account every day added to your exiſtence, as a freſh meſſenger from the mercy-ſeat,—a new and intenſer invitation to believe and live,—an additional evidence, that, in the mind of God, there are thoughts and purpoſes of love, the eternal benefit of which may be yours. Had he no ſuch purpoſes with reſpect to our world, he would terminate its hiſtory and his forbearance together. While the world continues, then, account it ſalvation. While death is delayed, feel and act as thoſe who are favoured with the means of ſecuring it. So long as the heart is ſuſceptible of a deſire after God,—and ſo long as his paternal forbearance multiplies the opportunities in which it may be expreſſed; ſo long have we proofs and aſſurances that the merciful refuge from the coming wrath is ſtill open, and ſtill may be entered.

6. It

6.

IT ſeems hardly neceſſary to remark that, ſuppoſing we participate the faith of Noah, we muſt ſtand prepared for trials like his. We may not be called to any great work; we may not be expoſed like him to univerſal obſervation, and have ſuch ſevere demands made upon our feelings; but, in bearing our daily teſtimony for God; in purſuing "the work of faith and the labour of love," as generally allotted to every believer; we ſhall find frequent neceſſity for energetic exertion of the ſacred principle. In proportion, indeed, to the ſphere we are to fill, or the greatneſs of the duties awaiting us in providence; in that proportion we may expect to be "tried" as a neceſſary diſcipline to fit us for the work. The painful and inceſſant trials of the patriarch, previous to the laſt and greateſt exerciſe of his faith, were probably requiſite, apart from all their *immediate* uſes, to prepare him for the dreary night of ſecluſion, he was ſoon to paſs amid the ruins of a world. In this light we ſhall find it profitable to regard frequent diſappointments or protracted affliction. There may be a criſis before us we do not anticipate, but for which we ſhould not be otherwiſe prepared. It may not be great in itſelf, but it may be great to *us;* it may be more than our preſent principle could encounter; and, therefore, he who knoweth our faith as well as our frame, may be mercifully leading us through a courſe of exertion, that ſhall enable us to paſs it with ſafety and ſucceſs. Faith, as a practical principle, is progreſſive. It admits of degrees. It is capable of growth. It is ſtrengthened by trial, as the oak of the foreſt is rooted by the ſtorm. At firſt it may be like the ſlender ſhoot, which the ſlighteſt breath may cauſe to vibrate; it may ultimately become, by gradual advances, ſufficient to withſtand the force of the tempeſt. In the early ſtages of the Divine life, comparatively ſlight trials may be ſuſtained with

difficulty; by the continued repetition and conqueſt of theſe, we may attain ſuch a ſpiritual robuſtneſs and vigour, as to be able to employ, with correſponding confidence, what we may almoſt ſuppoſe was the frequent ſong of Noah and his ſons. "*We will not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midſt of the ſea: though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains ſhake with the ſwelling thereof.*"

7.

LASTLY, let us rejoice in contraſting the conſequences which are to follow the conflagration with thoſe which reſulted from the deluge.

The deluge probably ſwept from our world many of the beauties of the primitive earth; the conflagration will reſtore them with ſuperadded magnificence. The world, when the antediluvians poſſeſſed it, remained as it had been made. The very forms and appearances which met the eye of the Creator when he expreſſed his paternal complacency, lay in extended and beautiful perſpective before them. Nothing had intervened between them and the creation. There could not be, therefore, *then*, *all* the phyſical indications of the apoſtacy which are viſible now. The deſtruction of the earth, by means which broke its parts and mingled its elements, left upon it, in ſpite of all the ſublimity and beauty that revived, fearful marks of ſome terrible convulſion. It completed the ruin which ſin had begun upon the ſpecies; and impreſſed proofs of the fall upon the world itſelf, not comprehended within the primitive curſe. The temple which God had originally erected ſtood before; and ſtood as he had made it,—ſtill retaining its form and dimenſions,—though filled with weeds, forſaken by the Divinity, and covered with much that diſfigured its exquiſite architecture. But now the temple is overturned; its arches and pillars are broken; and its materials are thrown together

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in confuſed maſſes, as if by the force of an exploſion or an earthquake. The feelings of Noah, on returning to the light of day and the ſcenery of earth, were probably like thoſe afterwards felt by the "ancient men" who returned from the captivity, and who wept on beholding the ſecond temple, while their children hailed it with enthuſiaſtic acclamation.—Such is the impreſſion naturally made upon the mind, by reflecting on the phyſical conſequences of the deluge. It produced, as it were, a ſort of natural harmony between man and his abode; it prepared a fallen world for a fallen ſpecies; —for the ſpecies continued unchanged: it retained and perpetuated in the new world, the ſame moral characteriſtics which had diſtinguiſhed it before. As men increaſed upon the earth, the old forms of depravity re-appeared; ſcenes of impiety, corruption, and violence were again repeated.—But, how different from all this, are the ſcriptural anticipations, reſpecting the conſequences of the coming judgment. They ſpeak of the reſtitution of all things; their recovery from thraldom; the regeneration of nature; the commencement of a perfectly virtuous and eternal age. "The heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe; the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth and all that is therein ſhall be burned up;—nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs." We anticipate a renovated univerſe; the fire ſhall only purify it from the groſſneſſes, and free it from the defects, of its preſent conſtitution. The earth is repreſented as now ſuſtaining the Divine anathema; in conſequence of this, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God." But in its next ſtate, "there will be no more curſe;" the groans of nature are to terminate; the anathema to be withdrawn; and a new world is to ariſe from the aſhes of this, which ſhall far tranſcend even the primitive earth, in the variety and grandeur of its phyſical appearances. And from this laſt criſis, man too is to emerge renovated and

reſtored; his nature is to be changed and perfected with his abode; a ranſomed, renewed, and "righteous" church, without ſpot or wrinkle or any ſuch thing, are to occupy a world renewed like themſelves. Thus, (to return to our former figure,) the temple originally raiſed,—and at preſent in ruins,—ſhall be raiſed again; raiſed with greater ſplendour and for higher purpoſes. Every thing that pollutes it ſhall periſh. The altar ſhall be repleniſhed with incomparable gifts. The ample ſpaces ſhall be filled with ſinleſs worſhippers. And the Divinity ſhall return,—ſhall make it his eternal reſting place; —pervade it by his preſence, and embelliſh it with his glory.

Diſcourſe vii.

The Firſt Trial of Abraham.

HEB. XI. 8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

THE perſons whoſe faith we have attempted hitherto to illuſtrate, lived, ſo to ſpeak, not only in a former age, but in a former world. They exiſted previous to the deluge. They were conſpicuous for their virtue amidſt thoſe portions of the ſpecies, whoſe depravity and crime gradually accumulating, at length ſo inſulted heaven, as to occaſion the infliction of that tremendous cataſtrophe. By this event, the whole frame of nature was convulſed. Much of the grand and the beautiful in the ſcenery of the primitive earth,—much that had at firſt excited the ſong, and perhaps the ſurpriſe, of ſuperior natures,—and much that had prompted the expreſſion and raiſed the rapture of patriarchal piety,—unqueſtionably periſhed. The ſcourge, however, was gradually removed. The waters returned to their place. Hills and valleys were formed and fertilized. The ſurface of the earth

earth aſſumed its preſent aſpect and appearances, and again became habitable by man. Man was continued as before. He ſuſtained no injury; his nature underwent no change. The deſcendants of the ſecond father of mankind were in all reſpects the ſame as thoſe of the firſt, though, in one ſenſe, the world upon which they looked was not. The ſame material, indeed, exiſts now, as exiſted in the days of the antediluvians; but its modifications and phenomena are probably different. Mountains and rivers familiar to *them*, endeared to their aſſociations, and perhaps celebrated in ſong, are no longer to be ſeen; the primitive creation has been ſwept away, and features are impreſſed upon the globe which they never knew. With thoſe perſons, however, who are now to become the objects of our attention, it is otherwiſe. *They* occupied the very ſame world with ourſelves. The countries in which they reſided are ſtill known by the ſame names. The mountains over which they travelled, or upon which they worſhipped, are mountains ſtill. The very ſame objects which met *their* obſervation, are preſented to ours. The very manners and cuſtoms which they obſerved or practiſed, continue, without variation, among the inhabitants of thoſe plains where they pitched their tents or erected their altars. This circumſtance ſeems to give them an additional claim on our regard. It brings them into a cloſer contact with ourſelves. It augments our intereſt by almoſt inſpiring the perſuaſion that there is a nearer alliance between them and us. They are not divided from our ſympathy by that myſterious Viſitation, that came like the Deſtroyer of one world and the Maker of another. They exiſted upon *our* ſide of that curtain that fell on a devoted ſpecies. Their hiſtory is extended by ſuch minute particulars, as awaken ſenſibility by acquainting us with their private and domeſtic concerns; by deſcribing occurrences with which we are daily converſant, or anxieties which we all habitually feel.

This introductory remark has ſuggeſted a reflection, which it may not be improper, perhaps, to embody in words. We have

have been adverting to the fact of a former world. Has it never occurred to you how little information reſpecting the inhabitants of that world ſurvived its deſtruction? It laſted, you remember, nearly two thouſand years; its population was great; the arts and ſciences were carried to conſiderable perfection; there were many eminent and illuſtrious individuals, "men of renown," diſtinguiſhed for their genius, their bravery, and their exploits: they were often, it is probable, celebrated as "immortal," juſt as perſons ſimilarly diſtinguiſhed are celebrated now. But where are they? "What was their name, or what was their ſon's name, if thou canſt tell?" Where was their "immortality" when the Eternal God "came forth from his place," determined to deſtroy the theatre of their fame, and to cover the nations with confuſion? Nothing has ſurvived to excite *our* wonder, to tell us what they were, or what they achieved. The hiſtory of the whole two thouſand years is contained in a very brief narrative; a few names have been preſerved from the general wreck; but theſe, we imagine, are *not* the names of the men who were the objects of popular idolatry, and the proud expectants of immortal remembrance. No; the memory of ſuch men periſhed with the world within which they had confined all their affections; the names of a few others ſurvive, who were ridiculed or deſpiſed by their corrupted contemporaries, but who were ultimately honoured by that Being in whom they confided, and for whom they lived. And thus, my brethren, will it be with the world that now is, as it formerly was with that which preceded it. "The righteous," and the righteous only, "ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance." The wicked are reſerved to "ſhame and everlaſting contempt." Many who are now celebrated as "immortal," and who have received the honours and the acclamations of ſociety, are only, with all this, paſſing along a ſplendid path to ultimate forgetfulneſs: while thoſe, however obſcure, who are "rich in faith," have their names written "in the Lamb's book of life," and are heirs of "the glory, honour,

honour, and immortality" which are to be conferred "at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt." "*The world paſſeth away and the luſt thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"

From theſe general obſervations, however, we advance to the mention of that celebrated man, whoſe life of faith is now to become to us the ſubject of remark and the ſource of inſtruction. The name of Abraham is ſingularly diſtinguiſhed in the annals of the ſpecies. His "call" conſtitutes an epoch in the hiſtory of the world. He is regarded with equal reſpect by different nations, and by the recipients of different and contending creeds. The Arab and the Jew alike revere him as their "father by the fleſh;" the Chriſtian venerates him as the "father of the faithful;" while the Mahometan cheriſhes his memory as the "friend of God." The traditions reſpecting him, preſerved in the works of ancient writers, are curious and remarkable. They ſpeak not only of his piety, but of his endowments and talents. They celebrate his learning, his wiſdom, his eloquence, and his bravery. He is not only conſidered as the firſt who rejected idolatry, and who worſhipped Jehovah the only God; but he is ſaid to have poſſeſſed a maſculine intellect, and ſuch powers of perſuaſion as ſuited a reformer. The Egyptians are repreſented as indebted to him for arithmetic and aſtronomy, and for certain communications reſpecting the principles of morality and the nature of religion. Among the Chaldeans many traditions were preſerved of his ſagacity, his virtue, and his ſkill in the celeſtial ſcience. The inhabitants of Damaſcus reported that he had once come with an army, taken their city, and reigned as a monarch. Theſe and ſimilar traditionary teſtimonies, whether they are regarded as exaggerations of fact, or as entirely fabulous, all tend, you obſerve, to one point. They evince that *he* was no ordinary man of whom ſuch things *could* be ſaid, and reſpecting whom they were remembered and believed for ſo many ages. To the authentic and ſcriptural account of this eminent individual, we are now to turn, in ſearch of that inſtruction which the Divine Spirit

Spirit intended it to convey. "*Whatever* was written aforetime was written for our learning;" no part of Scripture is ſuperfluous or uſeleſs; none was given merely to impart pleaſure or to gratify curioſity; all was deſigned for higher purpoſes; from every part, whether prophecy, precept, doctrine, or narrative, the diſciple may derive ſome aſſiſtance, and be enabled "to perfect holineſs in the fear of God."

Permit me to remind you that the object of the Apoſtle is to teſtify to the *faith* of the perſons whom he mentions. This is the one idea which, in the preſent connection of his argument, he attaches to the name of each individual as he records it; and it is to *this* that our attention is to be principally directed. It is not our deſign to take a review of all the events that occurred in the hiſtory of theſe diſtinguiſhed men: but of thoſe in which faith was conſpicuous,—in which it was required, diſplayed, and confirmed. In ſome, indeed, a high degree of the principle was in conſtant requiſition, as their circumſtances demanded its inceſſant activity. In others, though its exerciſe was no doubt habitual, yet its proof is confined to a ſingle recorded act in the hiſtory of the church. In the caſe of Abraham, his whole life was a life of faith; yet were there *four occaſions* on which was required from him ſignal evidence of its firmneſs and vigour. The firſt, to which the preſent diſcourſe will be devoted, is generally denominated the "call of Abraham," and is ſpecifically mentioned by the Apoſtle in the eighth verſe of this chapter. "*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*"

2.

ABRAHAM was a deſcendant of Shem, one of the ſons of Noah; he was the tenth, in a direct line, from the ſecond father of the world, and was born about three hundred and fifty

fifty years after the deluge. By that time men had extenſively multiplied, and had become, in proportion as they increaſed, ignorant and idolatrous. The principles and inſtitutions of the primitive faith were ſoon generally forgotten. They were firſt debaſed and then ſupplanted, by abſurd notions and impious obſervances. They were too ſimple to ſatisfy a depraved and corrupted nature. Loſing, by the fall, the capacity of refined ſpiritual perception, man became groſs equally in his intellect and his heart. He required ſomething ſenſible as the object of adoration and the baſis of faith. The ſublime conceptions of the bleſſed God, which occupied, we may ſuppoſe, the mind of Adam, were ſoon diſſipated and loſt, leaving his apoſtate deſcendants to the degrading ideas, which an injured and a fallible reaſon fabricated for itſelf. Hence, idolatry, in one form or other, ſoon became univerſal. It was diverſified by the genius and character of the worſhippers, but ſtill it was idolatry. It might be the lofty and poetic enthuſiaſm that adored the eſſential element of fire, as the pureſt repreſentation of the ſupreme ſource of vitality and knowledge. Or it might be a lower form of the ſame ſuperſtition, leading to the worſhip of the ſun and moon, and the various lights and luminaries of heaven. Or it might be the veneration of ſeparate human virtues, embodied in the forms of manly excellence and female perfection. Or it might be the ſtupid and grovelling imbecility of minds, that could find an object of worſhip in "four-footed beaſts and creeping things." It might be any, or all of theſe, but ſtill it was idolatry. It indicated a criminal perverſion of feeling, and intellect, and a proportionate departure from the true God. Previous to the call of Abraham various ſpecies of idolatry were practiſed. The moſt groſs and deſpicable forms did not ariſe till afterwards; but the more ſimple and elevated were then common. Whether *Abraham* was ever an idolater, perhaps it is impoſſible to ſay; but that his anceſtors were is expreſſly aſſerted by Jehovah himſelf. In one of his addreſſes to the Jewiſh people, he reminded them that

that he had brought the patriarch "from beyond the river, and from a land in which his fathers had worſhipped other Gods."

As in the moſt depraved period previous to the deluge, God never left himſelf without a witneſs, ſo he was now determined to ſelect an individual, by whom, and by whoſe deſcendants, he might at once preſerve a knowledge of religion in the world, and teſtify againſt the falſehood and criminality of the ſurrounding ſuperſtition. For this purpoſe he appeared to Abraham. He commanded him to leave a place, in which idolatry had obtained an entire aſcendancy; and to depart inſtantly to another he ſhould ultimately inherit. He ſimply gave the command, adding, indeed, a promiſe along with it, but imparting no particular information reſpecting the country to which he directed him. This is the invariable account given of the origin of the Jewiſh people,—the gracious and ſovereign ſelection of their founder by the Divine Being; partly for the direct diſplay of his mercy; and partly, as the means for the fulfilment of his ultimate purpoſes towards man. The fact is adverted to by different individuals in different and ſucceſſive ages of the church. By Moſes and Joſhua; by the Levites on the return of the Jews from captivity; and by Stephen when before the Council at Jeruſalem. The latter went back, in his addreſs, to this firſt movement of the Eternal Mind towards their fathers; noticed the moſt prominent mercies by which it was ſucceeded in the hiſtory of the nation; until the ſeries was conſummated by the actual appearance of Meſſiah "in the fleſh." "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, and ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will ſhew thee." Such was the explicit and peremptory command; and like Paul at his converſion, the patriarch "was not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion." He aroſe with firmneſs and promptitude, and, at the call of God, "he went out, *not knowing whither he went.*"

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The ignorance thus attributed to Abraham, may be taken to ſignify, not an abſolute ignorance of the point towards which his journey was to be directed; but, of the preciſe ſpot,—of the nature of the country, and the character of its inhabitants, and of the actual circumſtances that might await him in his journey thither, and in procuring poſſeſſion. He was, at any rate, to quit the idolatrous community; he was to leave the land of his fathers; he was decidedly to ſeparate from thoſe with whom he could not aſſociate without ſin; and, caſting himſelf on the protection of providence, he was to truſt that God whom he thus honoured and obeyed, for another habitation and another home. This he was called to do—and he did it. "He went out, not knowing whither he went;" like Paul, on his journey to Jeruſalem, "ignorant of the things that might befal him there;" having no clear intimation of what he was to ſuffer; but "ready," for all that could occur, ſuſtained by a principle of unlimited dependence on the Divine power and the Divine veracity.—He was to be "ſhown," indeed, another country; but, for anything *he* could tell, he might have to contend with poverty and want, previous to the ultimate fulfilment of the promiſe. He *had* to contend with ſome of the ſuggeſtions of ſenſibility and nature, in leaving the ſcene of early joys, the companions of ſocial intercourſe, and the objects of relative affection: and he *might* have before him trials, many and various, in which their preſence would be ſome alleviation, or from which their power might protect. Appearing as a ſtranger in the country to which he journeyed, he might find the people inhoſpitable, deceitful, or ferocious: he might have much to ſuſtain ere he could eſtabliſh a reſidence or participate repoſe. The weakneſs of nature might preſent theſe and a thouſand other poſſibilities to his mind; they might agitate, or alarm, or damp, for a moment, as they fell upon his heart; but they paſſed away,—occaſioning no failure in his faith, and no delay in his obedience. He had heard the command; he ſaw the duty; he felt the obligation; he

he knew the promiſe: he *could* truſt the faithfulneſs of God; he *ought* to follow the guidance of providence; he *would* do it, whatever might obſtruct, or whatever await him; and thus, —turning away from ſcenes among which it was dangerous to linger,—"*by faith, he went out, not knowing whither he went.*"

3.

FROM this firſt manifeſtation of Abraham's faith, and from this portion of his hiſtory, we ſhall now endeavour to deduce two or three topics of inſtructive obſervation and practical remark.

1. The firſt remark, ſuggeſted by the call of Abraham, ſeems naturally to be this,—that, the exiſtence of pure religion in our world, depends upon the gracious interpoſition of God. This will admit both of a general and a particular application. In *general*, we mean to aſſert, that, unleſs God had communicated, after the apoſtacy, ſucceſſive revelations of himſelf, in order to counteract the effects of that apoſtacy, the world, at this moment, would have been ſunk in the moſt profound ignorance of the Being that made it. What has Reaſon ever done, at any period, by its unaſſiſted exertions? Nothing. Nay, it has done *worſe* than nothing; for it has been too proud to acknowledge its ignorance, and therefore it has been employed in defending the aberrations of impiety and error, and in inveſting ſuperſtition itſelf with ſuch decorations, as might diminiſh its groſſneſs or conceal its deformity. So far as it is poſſible to aſcertain, Reaſon has never conceived correctly of God. The farther we penetrate into the infancy of nations, we find their faith proportionably pure. It ſeems as if they retained ſomething like truth, while they continued to truſt implicitly to tradition; but that, as ſoon as ever philoſophy preſumed to interfere, "profeſſing themſelves wiſe, they became fools."

Not

Not only has man been proved to be unequal to the *diſcovery* of truth; but, even when truth has been diſcovered for him,—when it has been actually revealed and put into his hands,—he has betrayed an utter inability to keep it. He has been unable to preſerve it from admixture or defect. The whole world, more than once, has corrupted its way, poſitively departing from communicated knowledge. In fact, the hiſtory of man is nothing but the hiſtory of ſucceſſive apoſtacies. The primitive revelation imparted to Adam, and by him, of courſe, to his offspring, was ſoon either corrupted or loſt, till ſcarcely a veſtige was correctly retained. By the circumſtance of the deluge, religion was reſtored to ſomething like purity; it was virtually reformed; it was reduced to its firſt and ſimple elements, and placed in the hands of a few perſons, to be preſerved and perpetuated by them and their deſcendants. The very ſame event, we have ſeen, occurred. It was again rapidly corrupted and loſt. Man, indeed, or at leaſt ſociety, cannot ſubſiſt without a religion. Human nature is eſſentially religious; it *muſt* have ſomething as an object of worſhip; and hence, even at the time to which we are adverting, the earth was covered with altars and filled with devotees;—but they were the ſhrines and the ſubjects of idolatrous devotion.—Now, *that* Reaſon, which had proved inſufficient to *preſerve* religion, was not likely to *diſcover* it when loſt. That guide, which could not keep us in the path when we were actually there, was not likely to lead us back again after we had wandered. And hence, unleſs God had interpoſed, as in the caſe of Abraham,—unleſs, that is to ſay, he had checked, *by miracle*, the inevitable tendency of our apoſtate nature, I ſee not how this world could ever have poſſeſſed anything like a pure or rational religion.

The argument ſtill admits of further illuſtration. It is confirmed by the hiſtory of all ages *ſubſequent* to the event from which we are deducing it. The tendency to defection was ſoon developed, in the favoured deſcendants of Abraham himſelf.

ſelf. It was ſeen, not only during their reſidence in Egypt, where, we may admit, they were dangerouſly circumſtanced; but even afterwards, in their own land, where every thing concurred to check its operations. After they had ſo often witneſſed the immediate and miraculous agency of God; after they had received ſo much knowledge by direct communication; after all this was enſhrined and protected, as it were, in written documents and by poſitive inſtitutions; one really would have ſuppoſed it was next to impoſſible, for this tendency to continue to obtrude itſelf: and yet what is their hiſtory? nothing but the detail of its ſucceſſive appearances! It was conſtantly leading them from the true God; involving them in ignorance, and prompting them to idolatry. It was for this that themſelves and their inheritance were, at length, apparently abandoned; that they and their "little ones" were taken captive; that Zion, "the perfection of beauty," was burned with fire; and "the place of their fathers' ſepulchres" laid waſte. But, after their return,—after the re-formation and re-eſtabliſhment of their faith and worſhip,—after all they had ſeen, and all they had ſuffered,—what was the effect?—The very ſame proceſs was repeated again! The form of the thing was conſiderably modified, but its character and eſſence continued unchanged. They were leſs addicted to palpable idolatry—to the proſtration of their bodies before the work of their hands; but they were more abandoned to intellectual offences—to the perverſion of the deſign and ſpirit of the Record. They became a nation of ſophiſts and Sadducees,—of ſanctimonious hypocrites, and "philoſophical believers." The Son of God, when he appeared, hardly found faith exiſting among them, and he pointedly expoſed the depth of their degeneracy, when he charged them with "*corrupting the Law by their traditions.*"—The argument may ſtill be illuſtrated, by adverting to the fate of the New Diſpenſation. After this was committed to the cuſtody of man; after a more perfect form of truth was imparted, and ampler means for preſerving

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it deviſed; why, even then, we ſee the ſame tendency to abandon or debaſe it, *re*-appearing in the Chriſtian Church! It began to ſhow itſelf under the very eye of the apoſtles; "the myſtery of iniquity did already work;" its ſymptoms ſoon became palpable and portentous; they gradually increaſed, in virulence and number, till, in a ſubſequent age, the ſplendid enormity of the "Man of Sin" exhibited a monument of moral apoſtacy, unparalleled, perhaps, in the annals of the univerſe.

Such, my brethren, have been the *achievements* of the human intellect, under direct and traditional Divine aſſiſtance. Admirable proof of the ſufficiency of reaſon! Glorious demonſtration of its claims as a guide! What *could* have been done by this boaſted attribute, if God had never interpoſed, when it ſeems to have been employed only to pervert his ſucceſſive revelations?—or, if not employed to pervert them, has, at leaſt, proved itſelf incompetent to their cuſtody. In this fact, we ſeem to have a ſtronger proof of its weakneſs and perverſion, than in all that can be urged, from its unſucceſsful attempts to riſe ſuperior to Gentile ſuperſtitions.

We muſt remark, however, to avoid miſtake, that revelation, though thus uniformly corrupted, has always been of incalculable advantage to man. In every age there have been humble and anxious inquirers, and to them it has given that certainty, in relation to matters of religious belief, which it is impoſſible to obtain from anything beſides. The truths and diſcoveries which man's moral condition requires, are not only ſuch as reaſon is confeſſedly incompetent to teach; but, they are ſuch, as, were ſhe even to conjecture, ſhe could never obtain arguments to confirm. They could thus be inveſted with no authority. They could poſſeſs and exert no power. They could not be held with confidence; enforced with deciſion; or obeyed with anything like alacrity or promptitude. Let us ſuppoſe, for a moment, that a human being ſhould actually conceive a ſyſtem involving the great principles of accurate theology. In this caſe, though he might feel their adaptation

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to his nature and his need, yet, all that could be done by him, would be to *wiſh* they might be true, or to wiſh they were *revealed*; for, without this direct miraculous aſſurance, they never could be *to him*, any thing but a barren, though beautiful ſpeculation. They have been much more than this, however, in every age to thouſands; but, had not God interpoſed, both to impart them at firſt, and to perpetuate their influence, I ſee not how, in a world like ours, they could ever, even have been *this*.

But the remark admits of a more particular illuſtration, to which it will become us for a moment to refer. It may be applied, not only to the exiſtence of religion, as a ſyſtem in the world, but to the exiſtence of religion as a principle in the heart. "*Who maketh thee to differ?*" is a queſtion, to which humble faith is never at a loſs for a reply. The New Teſtament invariably ſpeaks of a ſaving change as the reſult of Divine agency. If an individual receives the truth, it is becauſe "the Lord opens his heart." If numbers are converted, it is becauſe the word is attended "with the demonſtration of the Spirit and of power." If the church is enlarged and believers edified, it is becauſe "God giveth the increaſe." The whole Goſpel, in fact, both in its eſſential elements and its mode of propagation, is ſo conſtituted and ſo conducted, as to be a clear and conſtant declaration of this truth. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son, to be the propitiation of our ſins." The proclamation of theſe "glad tidings" is ſucceſsful only on account of the fulfilment of the promiſe, "Lo, I am with you." "It is not by might nor by power" inherent in the inſtrument;—"The treaſure is put in earthen veſſels" for the very purpoſe "that the excellency of the power may be ſeen to be of God."

The Goſpel, in its mode of operation, is, like its Divine Author, "the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever." As it effectuated its conqueſts in the firſt age, ſo it effectuates them ſtill. It ſtill cometh with the ſame energy, though not, in all

reſpects, with the ſame obſervation. "Who, then, maketh *thee* to differ," my believing brother? Who ſo adapted the outward means to the inward ſtate of thy mind, and ſo effectually wrought upon that mind itſelf, that the word came to thee, "*not* in word only, but alſo in power?" To whom doſt thou refer all this, but to Him whoſe grace called Abraham from the idolatry of his father's houſe, and whoſe grace hath called thee from the depravity or indifference of an ungodly world? In fact, the human mind is ſtill prone to idolatry, and the earth, in one ſenſe, is ſtill full of it. The form of the thing is changed, but the principle is the ſame. We witneſs on every ſide its moſt palpable exhibitions. We are ſurrounded, in this very country, denominated "Chriſtian!" with obvious and obtruding manifeſtations of idolatry; that is, with men giving their ſupreme affection to ſomething that is not God; ſomething that completely poſſeſſes the heart, uſurps that place in it which excluſively belongs to God, and which thus conſtitutes the man as really an idolater, as if he fell before it in the attitude of adoration. You may ſee one worſhipping his money; another his buſineſs; another, reputation; another, power; another his children; another his intellect; another his genius; and all, more or leſs, their *own will;* that is, virtually putting *themſelves* in the place of God, and preferring their own judgment or their own caprice to what *he* preſcribes as the matter of duty or the means of advantage. To all this the human heart is prone,—that is, *your* heart,—the heart of each of you; and if any have been taught to overcome its tendencies by a ſincere devotion of its affections to God, you will aſcribe it, I am perſuaded, to that grace, without whoſe inceſſant operations in the world, man, with all his knowledge of the Goſpel itſelf, would, I verily believe, ſoon become as really and practically ignorant of revealed truth, as were the idolatrous contemporaries of the "father of the faithful."

2. The ſubject may ſuggeſt a ſecond remark, reſpecting the neceſſity of a decided ſeparation from the world, in perſons profeſſing

profeſſing godlineſs. For want of this, many may be obſerved to ſpend years of indeciſion and diſquietude; indulging religious feeling to a certain extent,—an extent ſufficient to make them diſſatisfied with themſelves, but *in*ſufficient to produce a marked abandonment of habits and ſociety to which the feeling ought to be oppoſed. Such perſons ſeem to vibrate, in a manner, between both worlds; they ſeem alternately attached to each, as the attraction of either happens to be ſtrongeſt. Neither God nor Mammon will reward ſo divided a ſervice. Theſe unhappy individuals, therefore, are condemned to feel nothing but the pains peculiar to the followers of both. Let ſuch learn from the example of Abraham to ariſe and depart; to obey the dictates of conſcience as the voice of God; and to hold no parley with thoſe ſuggeſtions that would obſtruct or limit their devotion to Him.

The fact is, that it is ſeldom any great ſacrifice is to be made by deciſion in religion. With many it would only be to loſe the acquaintance and the approbation of thoſe, whoſe acquaintance is pernicious and whoſe approbation is cenſure. There are ſome perſons ſo weak and irreſolute,—ſo afraid of ridicule they may never hear—ridicule, too, which would proceed from thoſe whom inwardly they cannot reſpect,—there are ſome, who thus paſs years of diſtreſſing but not very dignified anxiety, alternately excuſing or reproaching themſelves; determining to be firm, and then falling before the moſt trivial temptation. Such individuals would do well to conſider two or three things. In the firſt place,—they dread, let us ſuppoſe, ſcorn or inſult; they fear they ſhall not have ſtrength to ſuſtain the contempt, the ſneer, or the laugh of the ſociety from which they muſt ſeparate; they may be aſſured, however, that this will be ſhort, for the world ſoon forgets *them* who forget *it*; the anticipation is much worſe than the reality, and this their wretched indeciſion increaſes and prolongs. A very ſuperficial acquaintance with mankind, quite unconnected with religious humility, might teach them that neither buſineſs nor pleaſure

will long be interrupted by people's attention being directed to *them.* Few are ſo important to others as they ſuppoſe themſelves to be. The world is too ſelfiſh and too buſy, too much abſorbed in individual intereſts and perſonal concerns, to beſtow much of either time or attention upon thoſe that leave it. In the ſecond place,—much is gained by prompt and open deciſion; it is not only beſt for ourſelves, as the moſt likely means both to certain and rapid conqueſt; but, even in the mind of irreligious obſervers, it will generally produce a ſentiment of reſpect. Men of the world are ſhrewd and juſt diſcerners of character. They are acute in the detection of any thing like inconſiſtency. They are much more diſpoſed to deſpiſe the perſon who profeſſes occaſional religious feeling, and yet is eaſily led to ſymbolize with themſelves, than one who openly condemns them, and devotes himſelf at once to what he profeſſes to approve. They may *hate* ſuch a man, but they cannot *deſpiſe* him. In general, however, whatever they may expreſs or *appear* to feel, they will be conſcious at times of a real, though ſilent, admiration of his character. In the third place,—that faith, which reſolves and attempts, will expand and ſtrengthen in the effort beyond your conception. God graciouſly rewards the exerciſe of the principle by augmenting its power, and making the endeavour to ſerve him the pledge of ſucceſs. In the laſt place,—by perpetual procraſtination, you diſhonour God. You inſult the Divine Majeſty, by bringing him into infamous competition with the world; calculating, ſo to ſpeak, the aggregate advantage which He and Mammon reſpectively promiſe. Such conduct is as prepoſterous as it is ſinful: it is difficult to ſay whether it be moſt diſtinguiſhed for its abſurd folly or its impious ſpirit. One thing, however, is certain,—namely, that ſo long as you thus act, continuing a conduct directly oppoſed to that of Abraham, you cannot be his ſpiritual children, nor "heirs with him of the ſame promiſe."

3. We may take occaſion, perhaps, without impropriety, to addreſs

addreſs a third remark to young perſons entering into life. Like Abraham, Providence may call you from your accuſtomed ſociety. You may have to go forth into the world, hardly able to conjecture where it may be your lot ultimately to reſt. Remember, the very ſame God who led the patriarch, can lead you; he ſtill continues to exerciſe the ſame ſuperintendence, and to afford the ſame protection. Only, above all things, "ſeek firſt the kingdom of God." Acquaint yourſelves with the Goſpel; accept its propoſals and imbibe its ſpirit. Be conſcientiouſly devoted to Him "who died, and roſe again, and revived, that he might be "Lord of all." Deſire nothing, attempt nothing but what an enlightened conſcience can approve; what you can calmly aſk the Supreme Power to proſper and to bleſs. Then may you go with confidence and hope. The conſciouſneſs of rectitude will inſpire courage; the perception of duty will aſſiſt faith; the union of both will produce a tranquil and ſteady dependence, which will equally reſtrain anxiety and preſumption; which will prompt both to active exertion and filial truſt; and which will iſſue, on either alternative of diſappointment or ſucceſs, in a calm, conſiſtent, and rational repoſe. "He ſhall be kept in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed upon God,"—kept, in either condition, whether there be given to him "poverty or riches;" *both* are trials, and Divine "keeping" is required under both. By ſtarting in life in the way we have recommended, the youthful, whatever their natural character,—whether cool, ſanguine, timid, or ambitious, —may learn both how to plan with wiſdom, and to execute with ſteadineſs; to enjoy with moderation, or to ſuffer with dignity. Proſperity will be received as the gift of God, and adverſity as the wiſely ſelected diſcipline of Providence. The latter will be ſuſtained with infinite eaſe, if it derive no additional weight from internal remorſe,—from the conviction that it comes as the conſequence of folly,—of time waſted in indolence,—of talents injured by neglect,—of the loſs of opportunities which can never return. Such ſad and piercing

reflections

reflections may be avoided by every young man entering into life, if he will enter it with a portion of the faith and feeling of Abraham; if he learn to follow duty wherever it may lead; to act uniformly upon principle; and to leave the event with God.

This is a determination, indeed, which none ſhould forget. In every period of life we are called to the reſolute exerciſe of principle; ſometimes in oppoſition to the ſuggeſtions of ſenſibility; at others, to the importunity of appetite; and at others, to the proſpect of immediate advantage. In every moral queſtion there is but one point for a Chriſtian to inveſtigate—"What is *duty?*" 'Tell me not,' he might be ſuppoſed to ſay,—'Tell me not of the danger, the pain, the privations; all this may be true, but I have nothing to do with it; it is not for me to waſte the energy of my feeling in exploring and anticipating theſe; I ſhall want it to ſuſtain them when they come, and muſt not expend it now;—*what is my duty?*' Having aſcertained this, he has one courſe, and only one; he can neither turn back, nor ſelect another: he muſt enter upon that propoſed, and muſt advance, like Abraham, though he neither know nor can conjecture to what it may conduct him.

4. A fourth and laſt conſideration may direct our minds to that final journey which awaits us all. Abraham was commanded to a country which he had never ſeen, and of which he had no definite knowledge. My brethren, each of us will ſoon be called to enter into that region, which is emphatically denominated in Scripture the unſeen or inviſible ſtate; a place from which none of our acquaintance have returned; which is inveſted with awful and myſterious obſcurity; and of which, therefore, we know nothing *definite* either by teſtimony or experience. We do know, in general, what God has told us, that to thoſe who follow the faith of Abraham, it will prove a far "better" country than this; one impregnated with the principles of illimitable life,—repleniſhed with ſources of exquiſite and

and incomparable joy. But are you ſo confiding in theſe declarations, exerciſing ſo firm a dependence upon them, that, whenever you are called, you will obey the ſummons without agitation, terror, or reluctance? Conceive yourſelves on the margin of the univerſe, on the utmoſt limit of creation,—*behind you* all the opulent arrangement for your preſent accommodation and pleaſure; all the captivating forms of grandeur and beauty; all the warm and familiar realities of the living and moving world: *before you* the deep, dark, fathomleſs abyſs; the unexplored region, filled with all the myſteries of ſpiritual exiſtence! Could you abandon the one without regret, and plunge into the other without apprehenſion! Are you prepared to depart from all that is familiar to all that is unknown? My brethren, this virtually awaits you. To do it will not depend upon your will. The call will come,—the command will be given,—and it *muſt* be obeyed. Nothing but a participation of Abraham's faith, can enable us to receive it with rational fortitude. Like him, we may then commit ourſelves to *His* protection, who can ſuccour with equal eaſe in life or in death. The proſpect of departure will cauſe no regret, nor the poſſibilities beyond it excite apprehenſion. Faith has the power of imparting to each of us ſomething like the ſublime compoſure of the Apoſtle and the Prophet,—"Now am I *ready* to be offered;" "though I walk in the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for THOU ART WITH ME."

Diſcourſe viii.

The Second Trial of Abraham.

HEB. xi. 9, 10, 13—16.

By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. . . . . Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

IN our diſcourſe laſt Sabbath, it was obſerved, that the whole life of Abraham was a life of faith, but that there were four occaſions on which was required from him ſignal evidence of its firmneſs and vigour. The firſt of theſe occupied our attention

at

at that time; namely, the call he received to depart from the land of his fathers, which, with unheſitating promptitude, he obeyed,—"he went out, not knowing whither he went." Animated by a deſire of univerſal obedience to the Supreme will; ſuſtained by unlimited confidence in the Supreme protection; and exerciſing a faith in the Supreme aſſurances, which the ſenſibilities of the heart and the proſpects of ſuffering could neither diminiſh nor diſtract; we ſaw this diſtinguiſhed patriarch abandon the community among which he had reſided for ſeventy-five years, and become a houſeleſs wanderer on the earth.

We are now to follow him into the country which he had been promiſed as an inheritance, and to obſerve the permanent operation of that ſame principle by which he was led to ſeek it at firſt. Not only did Abraham, when he was called "by faith," go out from Chaldea to Canaan; but, when he was actually there,—actually *in* the land, which it was repeatedly promiſed he ſhould poſſeſs,—he did not poſſeſs it,—but, "by faith," he ſojourned even in the land of promiſe as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles or tents, without a fixed habitation, anticipating ſomething ſuperior to all temporal property, looking for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God.

Paſſing over the eleventh and twelfth verſes, which will come to be conſidered under the *third* proof of Abraham's faith, we connect with the ninth and tenth, the thirteenth to the sixteenth, incluſive. In theſe, the Apoſtle repreſents Sarah, Iſaac, and Jacob, as having all been diſtinguiſhed for the ſame manifeſtation of faith, as that which we are about to illuſtrate as the *ſecond* diſplay of the principle in Abraham. They all confeſſed themſelves, even in the promiſed land, to be but ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth;—to be looking for ſomething afar off; of which, faith gave them the aſſurance; for the attainment of which, it ſupplied the energy; but the enjoyment of which this world was not to witneſs. "They deſired

deſired a better country, even an heavenly." And their deſire was neither irrational nor vain, "for God had prepared for them a city."

In diſcourſing from theſe paſſages, we ſhall attempt, in the firſt place, to explain their import in relation to the patriarchs; and then, to exhibit ſome of thoſe ſentiments, which, as ſtrangers and pilgrims, *we* ought to cheriſh, being virtually placed in a ſituation ſimilar to theirs, and "being heirs with them of the ſame promiſes."

When Abraham departed from his native country, it was under the promiſe of being "ſhown" another, which he was to poſſeſs, and his ſeed after him. The ſame promiſe was frequently repeated. Sometimes it was couched in terms referring only to his deſcendants, and explicitly predicting their previous bondage. But, at others, the Divine voice accoſted the patriarch in language like this; "Ariſe, and look around thee, eaſtward and weſtward, and northward and ſouthward, for to *thee*, and to thy ſeed after thee, will I give this land, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion." The ſame declarations were made, and nearly in the ſame words, both to Iſaac and Jacob ſucceſſively; ſo that they were heirs with Abraham of the ſame promiſe, not only by being his deſcendants, and thus virtually included in him at firſt; but, by having, in their own perſons, actually received a repetition and confirmation of the promiſes to themſelves.

That Abraham, however, did not obtain any actual poſſeſſions in the land; that his faith was tried by frequent removals from place to place; that he dwelt in tabernacles or tents, like one only reſting for a ſeaſon; that he thus appeared as a pilgrim and a ſtranger, permitted to reſide there through courteſy, rather than from acquiring poſitive rights;—all this is evinced by the hiſtory of the man as contained in the book of "Geneſis," and by the uniform tradition of his deſcendants, as recorded in the annals of the nation. Abraham made the acknowledgment himſelf in one of the moſt affecting moments of his life. The incident to which I refer, is related with inimitable

inimitable ſimplicity and pathos by the ſacred hiſtorian. "And Sarah died—in the land of Canaan—and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. And Abraham ſtood up from before his dead, and ſpake unto the ſons of Heth, ſaying, *I am a ſtranger and a ſojourner among you*, give me a poſſeſſion for a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my ſight." There is ſomething deeply affecting in theſe circumſtances of this venerable man. At a time when every ſecular anxiety ſeemed like a profanation of the ſacredneſs of his ſorrow, he felt that he had no place in which he could depoſit the remains over which he wept, until one was purchaſed from thoſe who could but imperfectly appreciate his character or loſs.—The ſentiment expreſſed by Abraham, at this time, reſpecting his perſonal condition, was afterwards repeated by David, in the moſt public manner. When he had determined to erect a houſe for the Lord, and for that purpoſe had collected great treaſure, he ſtood up before his aſſembled people, and offered a ſolemn addreſs to Jehovah in which the acknowledgment occurs. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all! But, who am I, and what is my people? we are ſtrangers before thee and ſojourners, *as were all our fathers;* our days on the earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding." The moſt explicit ſtatement, however, of the patriarch's want of poſſeſſion is contained in the addreſs of Stephen to the Jewiſh council of prieſts and elders. "The God of glory commanded our father Abraham to depart from his country and his kindred;—and he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Charran,—and then removed into the land wherein ye now dwell. *And God gave him none inheritance in it; no, not ſo much as to ſet his foot on:* yet he promiſed that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him."

Iſaac

Iſaac and Jacob, in connection with Abraham, are referred to, as we have already ſeen, in the thirteenth and following verſes. Very ſtrong and memorable expreſſions are employed reſpecting them. "They died in faith;" this includes *two* things; firſt, that they retained their faith *till* death, in ſpite of every trial with which it had to contend; this is religious perſeverance. Second, That *in* death itſelf faith was ſtill exerciſed, and that not only in reſpect to the fulfilment of the promiſes to their offspring, but in reſpect to their own perſonal participation of the bleſſing; this is religious confidence. This they did, it is farther remarked, "not having received the promiſes;" that is, not having received the *ſubſtance* of the promiſes in a temporal ſenſe; for the promiſes themſelves they had received, as, in the ſeventeenth verſe, Abraham is diſtinguiſhed by this very circumſtance, whe e he is thus deſcribed, "he that had received the promiſes,"—a deſignation equally appropriate, in their degree, to Iſaac and Jacob, as they alſo had received direct and explicit Divine aſſurances; yet the actual *material* of them, ſo to ſpeak, they had not received:—*that* they ſaw afar off; they looked forwards, penetrated the inviſible and the future, and beheld the faithfulneſs of God giving ſubſtantiality and permanence to whatever he had ſpoken; they interpreted the promiſes in a higher ſenſe, and in this ſenſe, "they felt perſuaded of them and embraced them;" their faith was thus both "the perfect perſuaſion of things not ſeen, and the confident expectation of things hoped for;" their intellect ſaw the certainty of all that was ſaid, and their heart repoſed upon it with warm and ſatisfied affection; their whole mind ſuſtained a correſponding relation to the whole truth; their reception of it combined the conviction of reality, with the fervour of appropriate emotion; and thus inſpired, by way of natural conſequence, a conſtant compoſure, and at times, an elevated joy, even while they confeſſed that "they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth."

The ſentiment thus advanced may be farther confirmed by illuſtrating

illuſtrating the terms of this "confeſſion." To be a "ſtranger," is to be from home, ſurrounded by unaccuſtomed, and, poſſibly, uncongenial ſociety. To be a "pilgrim," is to be proceeding forward to ſome ultimate point,—a point towards which the wiſhes tend, and upon reaching which, the reſolution is determined. They, therefore, who ſay ſuch things, declare plainly that they ſeek ſome other country, different from that in which they reſide, or through which they paſs. But this the patriarchs ſaid. It may be objected, however, that perhaps it was the country they had left which they were anxious to reviſit, and which they looked back upon with a ſort of filial anxiety, and a fond patriotic regret. No, it is replied, "if they had been mindful of that, they might have had opportunities to have returned;" inſtead of which, or inſtead of availing themſelves of theſe, they invariably manifeſted unequivocal repugnance to ſuch a meaſure, either in themſelves or their deſcendants. This was particularly the caſe with Abraham. When, according to the ſimplicity of ancient time, he ſent his ſervant to his father's houſe, to bring from among his relatives a wife for his ſon, the man inquired, whether, if the perſon were unwilling to accompany him, Iſaac ſhould return to that country and reſide there? To this the patriarch gave a poſitive and ſolemn reply, *repeating* his command to augment its impreſſion, and ſecure its fulfilment. "Beware," ſaid he,—"beware that thou bring not my ſon thither again. If the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou ſhalt be clear from thine oath—only bring not my ſon thither again." The ſame ſentiments governed his deſcendants. It was not *that* country which they deſired, but a "better," even "an heavenly." They were pilgrims, not merely in relation to Canaan, but to earth and time; they were paſſing through both to an "eternal city." God had prepared them ſuch. To this he had an ultimate reference in his promiſes, and of this they had an ultimate hope in their reception. And this they ſhall inherit with all their ſpiritual ſeed, "who ſhall come from the eaſt and the

the weſt, to ſit down with them in the kingdom of heaven." This is certain, and this they expected; God, thus, in the higheſt ſenſe, ſhall be faithful to his promiſes; and hence, though he gave them perſonally no poſſeſſions here, yet "he is not aſhamed to be called their God." "Speaking after the manner of men," he might have been "aſhamed" of the deſignation, "the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob," if he had given promiſes which he never fulfilled, and excited hopes which he never realized; but, ſince he has not done this,—ſince the promiſe, in its temporal ſenſe, *was* ſubſtantiated to their poſterity, and, in its ſpiritual ſenſe, will for ever be ſubſtantiated to themſelves;—ſince they looked to this higheſt acceptation of it rather than to the former, and have found their faith followed by its reward;—therefore, God continues the deſignation which he has no reaſon to relinquiſh; they do enjoy an everlaſting inheritance and a better country; God is ſtill their God; He deſcribes himſelf as ſuch,—"and he is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

2.

SUCH ſeems to be the obvious ſenſe of the text. The whole paſſage is one of great intereſt and conſiderable importance, and involves, perhaps, ſome principles deſerving to be more minutely inveſtigated. Inſtead, therefore, of ſuggeſting, at preſent, the practical remarks which were intended for the ſecond part of this diſcourſe, we ſhall inſtitute a very brief and rapid examination into one or two of theſe ſuppoſed principles.

It appears, from what has been advanced, that, in order to underſtand the Divine procedure towards Abraham, and to conceive correctly of the patriarch's faith, it is neceſſary to admit that the promiſes had a ſpiritual, as well as a temporal ſenſe; that they had an ultimate relation to a future world, as well as an immediate relation to this. Such a ſubject might admit of being very largely argued and illuſtrated. Without, however,

however, pretending to anything either profound or minute, we ſhall offer a few remarks, which will not, we truſt, be deemed inappropriate or uſeleſs.

The allegorical, ſpiritual, and typical interpretation of certain tranſactions, declarations, and facts, ſtated or deſcribed in the records of the ancient church, has often been carried to an injudicious extreme. This has given riſe to an indiſcriminate condemnation of all expreſſions whatever, that ſeem to countenance, in any thing, typical ſignificancy. This conduct, however, is neither religious nor rational. Though the fancy of ſome interpreters may be too warm, the feeling of other interpreters may be too cold; the one may reaſon too little, but the other may reaſon too much; and thus pure ſcriptural truth may be either miſſed or abandoned by both. It would certainly ſeem, one would think, to a perſon of plain unſophiſticated ſenſe, that there are ſome ſcriptural facts poſſeſſed of a poſitively typical character, and that there are ſome prophecies deſignedly capable of a double acceptation; and, therefore, it *may* be, that there are ſome promiſes involving both a temporal and ſpiritual ſignificance. The paſſover and the brazen ſerpent are of the firſt claſs. We have their typical character aſſerted by infallible interpreters, and their import is both obvious and affecting. The prophecies reſpecting the new heavens and the new earth, in Iſaiah, with other ſimilar alluſions to the renovation of nature, are, apparently, at leaſt, of the ſecond claſs. They ſeem to refer, firſt of all, to the moral reſtoration of man under the reign of Chriſt; and then, ſecondly, as expounded by Peter, to the actual "reſtitution of all things:" the removal of the curſe from the phyſical univerſe; the ultimate condition and character of the redeemed; the reeſtabliſhment of harmony among God's intelligent offspring; and the reign of eternal order. Hence, with theſe unqueſtionable proofs of ſuch a principle in ſome parts of the word, as gives a paſſage a meaning both immediate and remote; it certainly appears natural and logical to admit, that, poſſibly it

may

may be, the promiſes to Abraham, reſpecting an inheritance in Canaan, inſtead of being confined to what at firſt ſtrikes the ear, have an interior ſenſe, and belong to what is termed in the New Teſtament, "the eternal inheritance of the ſaints in light."

Again. It will be admitted, that all the diſpenſations of God to men, had a bearing upon their becoming ſpiritually fitted for a future world. This world, in all probability, was never intended to be eternal; at leaſt, it could not be intended that man ſhould eternally reſide in it. Had he remained innocent and immortal, and had the ſpecies, as immortal, uninterruptedly increaſed, ſome mode of removal from a place incapable of containing indefinite numbers, muſt have been afforded. But, however this might be, as ſoon as man fell and became ſubject to death, this world loſt all its *independent* importance. Henceforth, the ſpecies derived conſideration and dignity altogether from the fact of its connection with another. And their preparation for that other was the object of the Divine ſolicitude, and the end of God's moral government, from the annunciation of the firſt promiſe, through every ſucceſſive diſcovery of himſelf, and in all acts of his general and particular providence, up to this very moment in which we are met to worſhip Him.

This preparation of the ſpecies for their ultimate ſtate could only be ſecured by the direct interpoſition of God. It was neceſſary that He ſhould graciouſly communicate that knowledge and thoſe means by which it was to be effected. He did this; but in doing it, it ſeemed meet to Him to convey that revelation gradually,—to unfold it by degrees,—to impart, age after age, additional intimations of his plan and his purpoſes. It ſeemed meet to him, and therefore it was right. But, in conducting it, it does not ſeem likely that he would ever communicate any thing but what had ſome influence, more or leſs direct, in carrying on the proceſs; and, therefore, ſome connection, more or leſs remote, both with that concluding diſpenſation itſelf, which crowns and conſummates every other,

and with that future world for which it was the aim of all to prepare and capacitate the ſpecies. In carrying on this great deſign, the Divine Spirit, I imagine, never put forth any portion either of his energy or wiſdom, which terminated *excluſively* in the concerns of earth. It had not become him to do this. It comported not with the majeſty of the Supreme, to come forth from the unapproachable glory,—"to rend the heavens" to commune and converſe with man,—without having any purpoſe or communicating any ſentiment, but what was bounded by a world that "paſſeth away;" and, therefore, it ſeems antecedently probable, that, if he condeſcended to regulate the concerns of his people with reſpect to that world at all, it would be with ſome reference to that ſpiritual and higher one, into which it was the glory of his grace, and the ſplendid determination of his wiſdom, ultimately to conduct them.

Had there not been this further reference in the early diſcoveries of God's will, to the laſt Diſpenſation, and, conſequently, to the future world, there never would have been, properly ſpeaking, anything like "a fulneſs of time," when there was a peculiar propriety for that Diſpenſation to appear. That Diſpenſation would have been entirely independent of every thing that preceded it. It might have appeared a thouſand years ſooner or a thouſand years later without any diſadvantage. But, inſtead of this, we know that there was a gradual preparation of the ſpecies for the "manifeſtation of the glory of God in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt." The moral government of the world was purſued upon a plan. That plan bore at once upon this diſcovery and this preparation. The Supreme Ruler had an object worthy of his wiſdom. In his diſpenſations to the church, there was the conſtant dependence of one thing upon another; there was ſucceſſion and advancement; his conduct conſiſted not of iſolated acts; there was a perpetual accumulation of fact on fact and circumſtance on circumſtance, all pointing to ſomething ultimate—all preparing the

the way for the "coming of the Lord,"—and between all of which there was ſuch a connection, that none that followed others could have preceded them, and none that preceded could have followed, without a proportionate derangement of the proceſs, to the completion of which, each, in its order harmoniouſly concurred. To one point, one great event, theſe previous diſcoveries and facts thus invariably tended; and *from* it, when it was underſtood, many of them were ſeen to derive a ſtill farther alluſion, even to the remote conſequences of that event itſelf; thus making every thing that had deſcended from God for the moral benefit of man, point back again to the eternal return of man to the boſom of God; juſt as rays of light falling upon a reflecting ſurface, ſeem firſt to diſplay its ſplendour, and then to riſe from it again to ſeek in their native heaven the ſource from which they deſcended.

Once more. In a comparatively rude and ignorant age, before language had advanced much beyond its ſimpleſt elements; before words were invented to expreſs abſtract and ſpiritual ideas; and before the general employment of writing to embody them; metaphorical appointments, or facts and occurrences, ordered by Supreme wiſdom, and intended to convey, by way of allegory, ſome important knowledge, might be employed with peculiar effect. They poſſeſſed the power of communicating and preſerving a ſpecific idea, by preſenting ſomething palpable to the imagination as well as to the ſenſes; as, even now, we are aſſiſted in our conception of ſpiritual and intellectual truths, by illuſtrations appealing to the ſame faculty, drawn from familiar phyſical appearances. They would be remembered with a tenacity and a diſtinctneſs equal to the eaſe with which they were underſtood. And in the caſe of temporal promiſes poſſeſſing a ſpiritual ſenſe, or of phyſical remedies capable of an evangelical application; the temporal fulfilment of the one, and the phyſical efficiency of the other, might retain a perpetual uſe, by preſenting the church, in all ages, with an encouragement to faith,—exhi-

biting a memorial of God's paſt faithfulneſs in things that are leaſt,—and thus teaching us to expect, as his honour is more concerned, a diſplay of that faithfulneſs in things that are greater.

All theſe general reaſonings are corroborated by fact. When we turn to the New Teſtament, we find paſſages from the prophecies, and incidents from the hiſtory, of the Old, receiving an evangelical or ſpiritual interpretation, of which, without this, we had not, perhaps, conjectured they were capable. This, probably, we *ought* to have done; for it may be aſſerted as axiomatical, that, had there been no Saviour, there would have been no Revelation, and hence it is only reaſonable and conſiſtent to ſuppoſe, that in every part of the Scripture, *He* is ſupreme. This we now know and believe to be the caſe. To teſtify of Jeſus was the ſpirit of Prophecy; him, in all his various offices, it was the ſcope of the Law to prefigure and adumbrate; but ſtill it was neceſſary for himſelf, by his Divine power, to open the minds of the diſciples, before they could underſtand what was written concerning his character and work. Even in the caſe of Abraham, Paul, in his epiſtle to the Galatians, refers to the allegorical ſignificancy of ſome acts of his life, which it is yet difficult, as he himſelf admits, for us fully to comprehend. With reſpect, however, to the ſpiritual bearing of the *promiſes*, his language is as eaſily underſtood as it is clear and explicit. He aſſerts, and we receive his ſimple aſſertion as concluſive, that the aſſurance of an inheritance to Abraham, involved, and was by the patriarch regarded as involving, the promiſe of an eternal city "whoſe builder and maker is God." It was faith, he ſays, in this ultimate meaning of the promiſe, that ſuſtained this diſtinguiſhed believer in his long pilgrimage on earth; it was thus, that, though he acquired no poſſeſſion in Canaan, "no, not ſo much as to ſet his foot upon," he yet ſaw and acknowledged the faithfulneſs of God. It was hardly to be ſuppoſed, indeed, that he could confine the promiſe to its literal acceptation.

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He was not only to poſſeſs an "everlaſting inheritance," which ſeems of itſelf to carry the mind beyond the limits of a fallen and periſhing world; but he was to be the father of "many nations;" his ſeed was to be as the ſand of the ſea, and as the ſtars of heaven: for all this countleſs progeny, however, no place was ever named but one of a very limited extent, which, it was phyſically impoſſible *could* contain them. No mention was made of other countries as included in the inheritance promiſed to his ſeed; and, as Abraham was a perſon of very vigorous underſtanding, it ſeems probable that he might thus arrive, by way of natural argument, to the ſuppoſition, at leaſt, of ſome farther and more exalted application of the promiſe; and this rational ſuggeſtion would ſoon be raiſed into aſſurance, by the further evolutions of Providence, and the ſucceſſive intimations of the Spirit.—Thus, that patriarch who ſaw the day of Chriſt afar off and was glad, was alſo enabled to ſee the whole of the promiſes afar off in their celeſtial acceptation; to be perſuaded of them and to embrace them in this their loftieſt ſenſe: and, after a life of faith, to die in the exerciſe of the ſame principle; looking for an abiding city, a habitation and a home, where he and his children ſhould reſide together, having all, by the ſame proceſs, attained perſonal perfection, and entered on "the inheritance of the ſaints in light."

3.

IT would thus ſeem that a future life was firmly expected by the patriarchs. It is further to be obſerved, that it became a prevalent ſentiment with their poſterity, and was connected with the hope of a reſurrection from the dead. Even in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Job, (who was, perhaps, a deſcendant of Abraham, though not by Iſaac,) among many expreſſions of deep and diſtreſſing lamentation over the vanity of man, there occur others, which appear to derive their moſt

conſiſtent

conſiſtent interpretation from admitting their alluſion to this ſentiment. "Man lieth down and riſeth not: till the heavens be no more they ſhall not awake nor be raiſed out of their ſleep;"—but, when that event does occur, they *ſhall*. That event, or what is equivalent to it, appears, from other parts of the book, to have been anticipated, and, therefore, the inference may reaſonably be conſidered as implied in the expreſſion. It is neceſſary, alſo, to the ſignificancy and force of much that ſucceeds. Job was now ſuffering, as he ſuppoſed, from the anger of the Almighty; oppreſſed by this ſuffering, and, animated by the proſpect of which he had caught, as it were, a glimpſe, by thus adverting to what ultimately awaited the ſpecies, he immediately and fervently exclaims, "Oh that thou wouldeſt hide me in the grave; that thou wouldeſt keep me ſecret till thy wrath be paſt; that thou wouldeſt appoint me a ſet time and remember me!" Here, however, a doubt darkens the proſpect. He was not anxious for death, ſimply as death, but only as a refuge from pain. The bare poſſibility of its eternal duration rouſed his inſtinctive love of exiſtence, and he exclaimed—"*but*—if a man die *ſhall* he live again?"—His knowledge and belief are ſuppoſed inſtantly to ſupply an *affirmative*, and hence he triumphantly concludes, "Therefore, all the days of my appointed time will I wait (in the grave) till my change come. Thou wilt call, and I ſhall anſwer thee; thou wilt have a deſire to the work of thy hands."—Another paſſage, in the ſame book, is, apparently, an explicit expreſſion of the patriarch's hope. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day on the earth; and that, though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God."—In many of the other books of the Old Teſtament, there are paſſages expreſſive of the faith and feeling of the devout Jew, which refer, with different degrees of explicitneſs, to the ſame truth. Indeed, in the caſe of creatures ſubject to death, religion, properly ſo called, could have no exiſtence unleſs there was the proſpect of a future life. Without this there

there could be nothing like reſponſibility, and, therefore, nothing like probation. But this may or may not be the proſpect of a *reſurrection*. The vague, indefinite idea of ſome ſtate of conſciouſneſs ſubſequent to death, is ſufficient, without the addition of this ſpecific opinion. This opinion, however, it is, which, we aſſert, entered into the ancient traditional belief. It ſeems to be *indicated* in language like this—"the righteous ſhall have dominion over them in the morning." "I ſhall be ſatisfied when I *awake* in thy likeneſs." In the following, it is diſtinctly *expreſſed*—"Many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to eternal life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt." At the time of our Lord's appearance the opinion was almoſt univerſal. The very mention, indeed, of a ſect diſtinguiſhed by rejecting it, evinces it to have been ſo. Further proof is contained in the prompt reply of the ſiſters of Lazarus to the remark of Chriſt that "their brother ſhould riſe again,"—"We know that he ſhall riſe again, at the reſurrection at the laſt day." The ſtrongeſt teſtimony, however, to the general prevalence of the ſentiment in the Jewiſh nation, occurs in two of the ſpeeches of the Apoſtle Paul. In one of them, he ſays, "I believe all things which are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God, as they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and of the unjuſt." In another, "I ſtand and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto the fathers; unto which our twelve tribes, inſtantly ſerving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's ſake, I am accuſed of the Jews. Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you that God ſhould raiſe the dead?"—The force of this queſtion, and its direct and important bearing upon our preſent argument, will be ſeen, by conſidering that the reſurrection here referred to, as being thought "incredible," was not the general reſurrection, but that of Chriſt; it was for affirming *this*, that Paul was perſecuted by thoſe in authority; this, a fact of the very ſame kind

kind with that which they themſelves profeſſed to expect; this, a thing actually in harmony with their own principles; their rejection of it, therefore, was as abſurd as it was impious; and hence, the Apoſtle felt in defending it, that, not merely as men, but more eſpecially as *Jews*, he could appeal to their reaſon as well as to their faith.—The whole paſſage, indeed, is very remarkable, from its aſſociating the ſentiment in queſtion, with the "promiſe made of God unto the fathers." Whatever might be the ſpecific hope of the fathers themſelves, the hope of a "reſurrection" became, unqueſtionably, that of their deſcendants. *This* was the opinion that ſeems gradually to have prevailed, and to have been regarded at laſt as a characteriſtic part of the national belief.

4.

THE bearing of the whole of this argument upon the nature and peculiarities of the Evangelical Economy, muſt be obvious to all. There are perſons who, in interpreting the New Teſtament, fix, excluſively, upon the doctrine of immortal life, and the aſſurance of a reſurrection from the dead, as if this conſtituted the glory of the book and the characteriſtic diſtinction of the ſyſtem. That Chriſtianity has eſtabliſhed the fact of future exiſtence is readily admitted; but, ſtill we ſhould ſay, that if it had done nothing more than this, it would not have done much; and that to *do this*, it was not neceſſarily required; for, we have ſeen that the doctrine was underſtood before Chriſt appeared, and that at his appearance it had become a confirmed and vulgar expectation. The reſurrection of the dead *could* be believed, and *was* believed, independently of the teſtimony and example of Chriſt. As the ſentiment ſeems thus to have been entertained from very early ages; as it could eaſily have been confirmed by a mere propoſition from God; as, in fact, it *was* thus, apparently propagated and encouraged;

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it ſeems by no means likely, that the preparatory arrangements of the ancient economy,—the long array of prophets and promiſes,—the intenſe "ſearching" of inſpired ſeers, into what the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify—the earneſt looking of devout men towards "the deſire of all nations," "the appearance of Chriſt and the glory that ſhould follow;"—it ſeems unlikely, that all this ſhould relate, *merely*, to the more complete development of a doctrine, which was already known with ſuch clearneſs, as, in a very great degree, to ſuſtain the hope and invigorate the virtue of thoſe who received it. Therefore, we infer, that there was ſome *other end* to be anſwered by the appearance of Chriſt, ſuperior to his reſurrection from the dead; and that his reſurrection itſelf is important, in ſome *other ſenſe* than that in which it is ſeen to be the pattern of ours.—As future life is nothing without it be happy; and the diſcovery of the fact nothing to us, unleſs we are taught how it may become ſo; that ſacrifice, by which "he, who knew no ſin, was made ſin for us,"—by which an ample foundation being laid for the conſiſtent exerciſe of mercy, hope is imparted to the *guilty* as well as to the dying;—*this* is to us the peculiar and ineſtimable truth, which inveſts the Goſpel with its diſtinctive character, and makes it a meſſage of "glad tidings of great joy." Here was the accompliſhment of ſomething, which a ſpecies of beings, apoſtate as well as mortal, emphatically wanted! ſomething, which could not have been conveyed in a mere propoſition as the diſcovery or confirmation of immortality might have been, but which required the actual appearance of the perſon "by whoſe ſtripes man was to be healed."—Moreover, "As Chriſt died for our ſins, ſo he roſe for our juſtification." As he expired a ſacrifice, ſo his reſurrection aſſured us of its ſufficiency and acceptance. Thus, in the nature he had aſſumed and in which he ſuffered, he was capacitated to enter into the "holieſt of all," and to "appear in the preſence of God for us." Hence, his reſurrection partakes a new character, and is recommended by more affecting

conſiderations,

conſiderations, than when nakedly regarded as the mere type or repreſentative of our own. "For this cauſe, then, Chriſt both died, and roſe again, and continues to live," that he might be the "Saviour" of them that believe; "for, if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life."

Diſcourſe IX.

Sentiments ſuitable to Strangers and Pilgrims.

HEB. xi. 9, 10, 13—16.

By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. . . . . Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

ABRAHAM, as we have ſeen, was firſt called to leave his native country, and to journey towards another, uncertain of what might await him there; and this he did, ſuſtained by a ſublime ſentiment of perfect confidence in the

the guidance of God. Then, when he arrived in that land to which he was led, he was called "to ſojourn in it as in a ſtrange country," and to dwell in tents as a paſſing traveller without acquiring actual poſſeſſions; and this he did alſo, animated by the ſame ſentiment expanding and enlarging itſelf, till it roſe ſuperior to the hope of every terreſtrial inheritance, and looked "for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God."

It is farther ſtated by the Apoſtle, that the immediate deſcendants of the patriarch, who became "heirs with him of the ſame promiſe," became, likewiſe, heirs with him of the ſame faith. That they imbibed the ſame principle to the ſame extent; interpreted the promiſes in their moſt remote and exalted acceptation; unequivocally acknowledged, in the very land ſecured to them, that they were "ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth;" and thus "plainly declared" that they ſought another country, "even an heavenly." They confeſſed, obſerve, not only that they were "ſtrangers and pilgrims" in a *particular land*, but that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims "*on the earth*." They thus excluded every land within the limits of that earth from affording them a home, and therefore they conveyed, as diſtinctly as language could convey it, their belief of another world altogether ſurpaſſing the preſent one, to which, at the appointed time, "they ſhould remove away and be at reſt."

The antecedent probability that this ſhould be, and the actual proof that it was, the hope and expectation of the patriarchs, were deduced laſt Sabbath morning by a train of argument founded upon the phraſeology of the promiſes themſelves; the nature of the Divine Diſpenſations; the neceſſity and uſe of ſymbolical appointments, and ſenſible repreſentations of ſpiritual truth, in the infancy of the church; and very explicit apoſtolical teſtimony. We now proceed to the ſecond thing which was then propoſed, but which it was found impoſſible to comprehend in the ſame diſcourſe,—namely, to exhibit

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ſome of the moſt important ſentiments which, as ſtrangers and pilgrims, *we* ought to cheriſh, being virtually placed in a ſituation ſimilar to theirs, and being heirs with them of the ſame promiſes.

That the character, profeſſedly ſuſtained by theſe ancient believers, did not ariſe from any peculiarity in their ſituation, that it was not excluſively theirs, but, that it belongs to man as man, and ſtill more emphatically belongs to believers as ſuch, muſt be known to every perſon at all acquainted with the language of Scripture. "I am a ſtranger and ſojourner with thee, as all my fathers were," is the devout acknowledgment of David. Leſt you ſhould ſuppoſe, however, that this was the reſult of ſome temporary anguiſh, the mere paſſing impreſſion of the ſorrow under which he laboured, when he wrote the pathetic compoſition in which it occurs, ſuffer me to remind you that he made the very ſame confeſſion in one of the moſt glorious moments of his life, when he was ſurrounded by his aſſembled nobles and felt ſecure in the ſtability of his throne.* The Apoſtle Peter addreſſes Chriſtians under the ſame character, and founds upon it a ſtrong practical appeal; "Dearly beloved, I beſeech you *as ſtrangers and pilgrims*, abſtain from fleſhly luſts that war againſt the ſoul." The conſtant tendency, indeed, of the New Teſtament inſtructions is to ſupport this ſentiment in its proper vigour. "Ye are not of the world." "Set your affections on things above." "I leave the world and go to the Father. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am ye may be alſo." "The earthly houſe of your tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved. But ye have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "While ye are at home in the body, ye are abſent from the Lord." "But the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, —ye ſhall appear with him in glory,—ye ſhall be like him,— ye ſhall be ever with him." "Therefore, ſeeing that ye look

* See p. 140.

for

for ſuch things, be diligent,—be always abounding in the work of the Lord,—that ye may have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life." Such, my brethren, is the uniform and pervading ſpirit of whatever was ſpoken by the Maſter, or written by his repreſentatives, for the inſtruction of the church: ſentiments, exhortations, appeals, all preſuppoſing the fact of "our ſojourning," like Abraham, "as in a ſtrange country, and our looking for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and ruler is God."

Before we proceed to the direct ſpecification of thoſe ſentiments which ſtrangers and pilgrims ought to cheriſh, permit me to remark, that the epithets will not apply to all men indiſcriminately. There is one claſs of perſons to whom *both* the epithets will apply in their moſt emphatic acceptation; but there is another claſs of perſons to whom only *one* of them will apply, and that, too, in an inferior ſenſe,—a ſenſe expreſſive more of the neceſſity of nature than of the diſpoſition of the mind. In this world, all men are *ſojourners* or *pilgrims*, becauſe all men are faſt paſſing towards the futurity beyond it. But all men are not *ſtrangers* here. There is a large claſs of men to whom the world is perfectly congenial; who feel nothing ſtrange, nothing unnatural, in anything about it; who, in the purſuit and the enjoyment of "the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life," are quite in their element, and juſt where they wiſh to be. Now it would be abſurd to talk of ſuch men being *ſtrangers* in a world diſtinguiſhed as the property and the domain of theſe three inſtruments of pleaſure, beyond which, in one or other of their forms, they never have a wiſh. They may be ſtrangers among thoſe who are "*not* of the world;" they would be ſtrangers in "heaven," where ſuch will only find their congenial country; but, upon *earth*, they are in the very place, and are ſurrounded by the very ſcenes, and can find the very ſociety with which they could be ſatisfied for ever. And they are *pilgrims*, not becauſe they wiſh it, but becauſe they muſt. The laws of nature compel

compel them to advance. There is a fatal and invincible neceſſity which carries them on, through life and away from it. But ſo far as feeling is concerned, they have nothing of the character of the pilgrim about them; the very idea of pilgrimage, if ever it happen to be excited, falls heavily on the heart; every ſymptom of their progreſſion ſeems like a puniſhment; they would rather remain where they are; they deſire no better country; this, through which they paſs with a moſt painful rapidity, is ſufficient for *them;* and therefore they would willingly take up their eternal abode in it, if they could retain, along with exiſtence, the inſtruments of earthly indulgence, combined with the undiminiſhed power to employ them.

To men, therefore, as men, the epithets will not apply in their moſt impreſſive ſenſe; nor is it to you, under this general character, that we are about to ſubmit the ſubſequent ſuggeſtions; but it is to you as *Chriſtian* men, who truſt that in ſome degree they have become partakers of Abraham's faith. Chriſtians are ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth, not only becauſe they are mortal, and muſt of neceſſity depart from it, but becauſe the two following circumſtances render them ſuch in the moſt intenſe acceptation of the terms. In the *firſt* place, by the renovation of the heart, their deſires and *propenſities*, ſo to ſpeak, have become ſuch, that the world has nothing to offer, either ſuitable to their nature or adequate to their demands. They feel a growing repugnance to whatever is merely of the earth. Being "born of God," to uſe the expreſſive language of Scripture, they have become partakers of a "divine nature," and are thus taught to experience diſſatisfaction with every thing that belongs excluſively to the world. Their predominant anxiety is, to be morally conformed to God. They can look to the ſource of their new life, and ſincerely ſay with the devout Pſalmiſt, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth whom I deſire beſides thee?" "I would not live alway." "I ſhall" not "be

ſatisfied"

ſatisfied" till "I awake in thy likeneſs." Whatever oppoſes the acquiſition of this, is the ſource of diſquietude; and in the world there is much to oppoſe it: this oppoſition, therefore, of the world, to their predominant deſire, renders them emphatically "ſtrangers" in the very midſt of its population and purſuits.—But, in the *ſecond* place, by this renovation of the heart, the believer is made an "heir" of "the glory which is afterwards to be revealed." He is conſtituted a "citizen" of "the New Jeruſalem." This, henceforth, becomes his hope and his home. It is his father's houſe, the reſidence of his holieſt kindred, the habitation of his beſt friends, the place of ultimate repoſe for all who belong to the ſame ſpiritual family with himſelf. Every wiſh, therefore, terminates here. Every feeling expands and enlarges till it touches that deſired country, for within that country is contained every thing with which he aſſociates either excellence or joy. Hence it is, that, eſteeming it better to be "preſent with the Lord," than to be "at home in the body," he accounts himſelf a "pilgrim" paſſing and preſſing onwards, anxious to advance through the appointed path, "to the eternal inheritance of the ſaints in light."

Let us endeavour, then, in the further proſecution of the diſcourſe, to exhibit ſome of thoſe ſentiments which perſons ſuſtaining this character ſhould habitually cultivate.

And firſt we remark, that they ſhould frequently call to mind, with great ſeriouſneſs, that they *are* ſtrangers and ſojourners here. At firſt ſight, an obſervation like this may to ſome appear unneceſſary, as it might be ſuppoſed that ſuch a fact could never be forgotten. He, however, knows little either of his own heart or the deceitfulneſs of ſin, who is not painfully aware of the contrary. The Supreme Being has not been unmindful of our enjoyment while purſuing the journey which he has ſet before us. He has given us capacities for exalted and exquiſite pleaſure. He has filled earth and heaven with forms of ſurpaſſing beauty. He has connected the perception

ception of delight with much that belongs excluſively to the world. And all this, inſtead of exciting gratitude and animating diligence, the weakneſs and the depravity of man too frequently turn into an occaſion of ſin. We are apt to forget the Giver from the very multitude and magnificence of his gifts. We are ſo alive to immediate impreſſions, ſo abſorbed at times by all that is ſeen and ſenſible, as to be utterly unmindful of thoſe remote and eternal realities, which at laſt will occupy the whole field of viſion, and exclude from our attention every temporary thing. If God were leſs bountiful, we ſhould probably remember him more. If fewer objects intervened between him and us,—if our pleaſures and purſuits were leſs intenſe and leſs diverſified, we ſhould, perhaps, more ſeriouſly remember the fact of our pilgrimage. So long as we remain here, that nature, "which is of the earth, earthy," will need to be ſubdued by active and conſcious effort. It is ever aiming at an aſcendancy, and, whenever it obtains it, its direct influence is to expel from the thoughts every aſſociation of eternity and God. In proportion as theſe are excluded, ſhall we diſplay a forgetfulneſs reſpecting our actual condition and buſineſs in the world. But, if we forget what we are, forget that we are "ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth," our character and habits will become inconſiſtent with our actual ſituation. Hence the neceſſity of often ſeriouſly recollecting the fact. It is not enough to make the acknowledgment in words. It ſhould become an abiding ſentiment, a regulating feeling. It ſhould be ſupported in its ſtrength and activity, by frequent meditation and habitual prayer. We ſhould retire at times from the world, leave its engroſſing engagements at a diſtance, penetrate into eternity by the exerciſe of faith, and thus, by thinking greatly and juſtly of heaven, we ſhould learn to think correctly of our condition upon earth.

2. If we are engaged in a "pilgrimage" in a ſtrange country, we may learn the neceſſity of *direction*, in order to advance with ſecurity and ſucceſs. This idea is often ſug-

geſted by the ſacred writers in connection with the expreſſion of their confidence in the word of God. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path." "Thou wilt guide me by thy counſels, and afterwards receive me to glory." There are two different ſenſes in which this ſecond obſervation may be viewed. The firſt refers to a proper knowledge of ſcriptural truth; the ſecond, to the perception and purſuit of ſcriptural obedience. In the one ſenſe, it is applicable to men as men; in the other, it pre-eminently belongs to believers.

In the firſt place, it becomes us, as intelligent beings occupying a peculiar poſition, to acquire an accurate acquaintance with our condition and circumſtances; to aſcertain *what* they are, and *why;* how they may be accounted for, and how improved. Why it is that we are ſtrangers and pilgrims *at all?* Why ſhould there be a world, within the univerſe of the Eternal, where the very beings born in it ſhould not find themſelves at home? Why ſhould there be that fearful tranſition at the end of "the pilgrimage" which we all perfectly know awaits us? Why ſhould it be inveſted with ſuch incalculable terror? Why is it that ſo many of our fellow-travellers are equally afraid of death and tired of exiſtence?—incapable of reliſhing the delights of life, and yet reluctant to return to the God that made them? What is to be done in a ſituation of perplexity like this? Is there no explanation afforded?—no aſſiſtance by which we may interpret the appearances of Providence and nature?—by which we may be enabled to form a juſt eſtimate of the preſent ſcene, and to ſelect the right road to the futurity beyond it? Yes: in the word of God there is every information we can require. There is a full development of the cauſes which give that peculiar character to our ſituation which it is acknowledged to poſſeſs. There is an account of the manner in which man, by becoming guilty, became ſubject to death; of the method in which he is to be recovered; of the ſentiments he is to entertain towards offended Deity; and of the

the way in which alone he can ſafely approach Him. In this book, therefore, there is every thing that can intereſt the intellect and touch the affections, becauſe there is every thing that is "profitable to *direct*" thoſe who are "ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth."

But, in the ſecond place, not only do we need direction as *men*, but as *Chriſtians*. Not only are we to be anxious reſpecting the fundamental principles of which our faith is to conſiſt; but, when theſe are felt to be aſcertained and eſtabliſhed, we need at times to be anxious about the preciſe way in which duty is to be purſued. There is both ſpeculative truth and practical truth. There is firſt the queſtion, what am I to do as a ſinner? how am I to come before the Lord for mercy? And after this, there is frequently another queſtion, What am I to do as a ſaint? how am I to act as one that has obtained mercy? how am I to feel and to evince that I am walking in that way in which God would have me to walk? In the courſe of our Chriſtian pilgrimage, (to return again to the figure of the text,) we often come to perplexed and intricate places, in which it is extremely difficult to determine in what direction it becomes us to advance. On ſuch occaſions our firſt duty unqueſtionably is to look up, with ſincerity and fervour, to the Fountain of Wiſdom, for ſuch ſupplies as the emergency may demand. But our ſecond is like unto it, which is, to apply our reaſon to the *revelations* of wiſdom, that we may derive from thence an anſwer to prayer. There are certain great general principles in the written word, applicable to every poſſible diverſity of circumſtance; and it is by the juſt application of theſe, that we are to aſcertain what is the will of God in any particular caſe. As this is often an important inquiry in the pilgrimage of life, it may not be amiſs, perhaps, to mention the following conſiderations, as likely to be found eminently beneficial, in our attempts to decide upon difficult practical queſtions.

Fix firmly in your minds, as the foundation of all your reaſoning, that you do know what is the will of God in general

—namely, *your ſanctification*. You do know, whatever elſe you may be ignorant of, that, at all times and under all circumſtances, you are to ſeek God's glory—that is, the diſplay of his grace in you—by making the purſuit and the augmentation of perſonal holineſs your ſupreme concern. You know this. You know it to be a plain and primary truth. This truth, therefore, you are to take, and to apply as a *teſt*, to every path that opens before you, and to every inducement that preſſes you to enter it. Will it aſſiſt or obſtruct my ſanctification? Will holineſs be promoted or endangered? If obviouſly and greatly *promoted*, the matter would ſeem to be determined, as this would aſcertain its conſiſtency with what you *know* to be the Divine will. But if there ſhould be *danger*, you will ſay, how am I to act? This, I imagine, is the great point, for it is only on account of ſuch an apprehenſion that I can conceive anything like peculiar practical difficulty to be felt. How you are to act, then, I ſhould reply, will depend upon circumſtances. A Chriſtian may certainly be called to occupy a poſt of great perſonal hazard; but it will be, very obviouſly, for the performance of ſome important duty, or the accompliſhment of ſome act of diſtinguiſhed benevolence. If neither of theſe can be pleaded, the dangerous poſition muſt be ſhunned; if they are felt not to be effected, it muſt be reſolutely left. Cloſe examination, in connection with the application of the teſt to which we have referred, would appear to be requiſite under every form which this inquiry could aſſume. Its different aſpects might perhaps be preſented in the following manner. Here is danger: What is to be obtained by my expoſure to it? If *conſcience* reply, "nothing—nothing but perſonal enjoyment; perceptions of delight, innocent perhaps in themſelves, but which to you might be injurious in their influence, and would ſoon be difficult to reſign;" in ſuch a caſe the way is clear. The man *knows* his ſanctification is the will of God; he does *not* know that theſe indulgences are, which ſeem ſo likely to draw away his heart; nay, in the very fact of that likelihood, he

he has all the proof he ſhould require of its being his poſitive duty to avoid them. Again. Here is danger: What is to be obtained by my expoſure to it? If *conſcience* reply, "there *is* danger, but, by watching againſt it you may be ſafe, and, if ſo, your poſition will afford you great facilities for very important benevolent exertion;" then, it would ſeem, the man might attempt the trial, becauſe he knows it is the will of God that he ſhould do all poſſible good to others, conſiſtent with the preſervation of his own virtue. But, ſuppoſe we go a ſtep farther; ſuppoſe we allow the trial to have actually been attempted, and imagine the man to be comparing the probability of the future with the recollection of the paſt; and ſuppoſe conſcience then ſays, "whatever may be the power of uſeful exertion, which your poſition is ſuppoſed to confer, obſerve, that the trial *has been* made, and that, too, not only without ſucceſs, but with perſonal injury; you have ſuffered more in yourſelf than you have accompliſhed for others; the difficulties are conquering *you*, you are not prevailing againſt *them* to the ultimate accompliſhment of the benefit you propoſed." In ſuch a caſe the path of duty would ſeem equally clear. The man *knows* his ſanctification is the will of God; but he does *not* know that it is the will of God for him to effect *that ſpecific object* which he had previouſly planned.—In ſhort, in all caſes, perhaps the firſt ſuggeſtion of the conſcience and judgment may be relied upon, and followed with ſafety. There is a quick and inſtinctive ſenſe both of duty and danger in a well regulated mind; the Chriſtian ſeldom errs while he promptly obeys it; he is ſeldom perplexed, perhaps, till he has ſilenced, in ſome degree, this internal monitor; till he has liſtened to temptation as well as to conſcience; till his feelings have acquired an improper control, and have given to Reaſon herſelf a tongue of ſophiſtry by which to plead their cauſe, and to divert him from a manly obedience to his pureſt and primary impulſes.

3. As ſtrangers and pilgrims, it will become us to expect privations; to form very moderate hopes of preſent ſatisfaction;

to

to encumber ourſelves with nothing that may retard our advancement; and to be ready to relinquiſh, at the call of the Maſter, many a delightful ſecluſion, in which we might be glad, if it were permitted us, to reſt.—Theſe are general ſuggeſtions which it is not neceſſary very minutely to illuſtrate. Their juſtice is intuitively obvious. The mere annunciation of them, carries along with it a ſenſe of their propriety and a proof of their importance. The character we ſuſtain, or at leaſt *profeſs* to ſuſtain, founded, as it is, upon the fact of our purſuing a journey through a world in which we expect no permanent poſſeſſions, pre-ſuppoſes our conſtant attention to all we have advanced. Our path, too, is beſet with diverſified danger. "The Ruler of the darkneſs of this world," is in arms againſt us. It becomes us, therefore, to take "the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withſtand all the fiery darts of the wicked." Here, however is the difficulty,—the putting on the "*whole*" of this armour. We ſeldom, perhaps, ſee Chriſtians entirely *un*-armed; but we ſeldom ſee them ſecured in *every* point. Almoſt every one neglects ſome piece, which he finds either inconvenient to wear or difficult to wield. According to the original conformation of the mind, certain parts of the armour are conveniently fitted to us, certain weapons can be readily uſed. Aſſiſted by natural feeling as well as ſtimulated by duty, we can employ them with facility and power. But then, there is ſome other inſtrument, in the uſe of which we find it extremely painful to become proficient; we perhaps give up the endeavour as a hopeleſs attempt, or throw the weapon away as a cumberſome thing. Such conduct is obviouſly abſurd. It is affording the adverſary an immenſe advantage. However difficult the leſſon, we *muſt* learn to ſtoop and take it up again, and perſevere in the exerciſe, till, if poſſible, we acquire in the uſe of it dexterity and confidence. . . . . As we proceed in our journey, we meet with many green, refreſhing, and beautiful ſpots,—and God means us to enjoy them; he has given them for this very purpoſe; they are intended

intended to mitigate the aſperities of the way, and to recruit our exhauſted vigour. But we are not to make them heaven. However inviting and however welcome, "*they are not our reſt;*" we muſt ſtill remember that there is ſomething ultimate, and ſomething that infinitely ſurpaſſes them all.—We ſhould be particularly ſuſpicious, I imagine, particularly apprehenſive of danger, when we ſeem to be ſurrounded by a peculiar combination of pleaſurable circumſtances. We ſhould "rejoice with trembling." This is not the place of reward, but of trial. Whenever the heart, therefore, ſeems to be filling with delight, derived from relative ſources and preſent poſſeſſions, let us fear leſt we make an idol of the joy, and cauſe God to ſnatch it in his wrath from the boſom of the worſhipper. . . . . Our great buſineſs ought to be, in relation to all objects, events, and circumſtances, to extract from them what will enrich us in the higheſt ſenſe; what will contribute to that eternal treaſure which we can carry with us to any world. How abſurd for travellers to accumulate either property or knowledge which can be of no uſe whither they are proceeding! which forms no part of the poſſeſſions or pleaſures of their paternal land! The virtues of a renovated mind are alone eternal. Nothing is important, nothing deſirable, comparatively ſpeaking, for "ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth," but what bears in one way or other upon theſe,—upon the qualifications it becomes them to poſſeſs as heirs of a renovated world. It requires, however, many a painful proceſs of diſcipline, before we are brought to feel or to acknowledge this, with any thing like practical ſincerity. It is ſo long before we are willing either to be virtuous or happy in any way but our own. We have formed, perhaps, certain notions of the neceſſity of ſuch and ſuch things to enable us to attempt with ſucceſs, what we ought to be ready to attempt at all times, and with any means that God may think fit to afford us; and, becauſe he does not think fit to indulge our paſſion, our ſelfiſhneſs, or pride, we ſit down in ſullenneſs or ſloth, ſpending our powers in indolence or rebellion,

rebellion, while the ſun is riſing in the heavens, or the thunder gathering in the ſky. How much need, my brethren, have all of us to employ that beautiful ſupplication of the Pſalmiſt, "Search me and try me, O God, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting."—"Lead me in the way everlaſting;" here is a prayer eminently fitted for pilgrims; and there is a correſponding promiſe, expreſſed in the form of pious perſuaſion, "thou *wilt* ſhew me the path of life." Hundreds of paths are inviting us to enter, but only one is a "path of life," only one is "a way everlaſting." All but this terminate here, and leave thoſe who ſelect them to the awful conſequences of a miſtaken choice. The way of ambition will terminate; and the way of conqueſt will terminate; and the way of ſcience will terminate; and the way of pleaſure will terminate; *every* way of vice and iniquity will terminate;—but there is a way everlaſting; there is a way that will never terminate; it is apparently interrupted,—it is only in appearance; the ſoul that ſteadily purſues it will purſue it for ever; the mind once engaged in preſſing forward to a likeneſs with God, will occupy an eternity in the ſame purſuit —ever approximating but never approaching; acquiſitions eternally increaſed with a proſpect eternally enlarged.

4. The laſt ſentiment we inculcate is this—The propriety of thoſe, who are engaged in the ſame journey, cheriſhing an affectionate ſympathy in each other. When inhabitants of the ſame town happen to meet in a diſtant place, they meet with the cordial glow of kind recognition. Subjects of the ſame kingdom, meeting in a foreign land, experience emotions of peculiar intereſt; ſhould either be expoſed to danger, the other becomes the defender of his character or perſon. How much more ſhould thoſe who are "brethren" manifeſt towards each other reciprocal regard! While paſſing along the ſame path, let us candidly judge the conduct, and patiently bear with the infirmities, of each. Let us be ready to aſſiſt our aſſociates by the exerciſe of power or the communication of knowledge.

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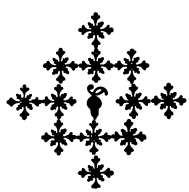
We may at one time alleviate diſtreſs, and at another remove perplexity. Some we may introduce to the path, ſome we may prevent from leaving it; but by all means let us be careful not to ſeduce any from the proſecution of its duties; no agony can be equal to that reſulting from the conſciouſneſs of having trifled with the virtue and endangered the ſalvation of an immortal ſoul. . . . . What cordial eſteem! what affectionate attentions! what unfeigned courteſy! what faithful friendſhip! ſhould diſtinguiſh thoſe, who, as "heirs together of the grace of life," are advancing in the ſame path to the ſame home! "See that ye fall not out by the way," ſaid Joſeph to his brethren, founding his admonition on their natural relationſhip. "Above all things," ſays Peter, "have fervent charity among yourſelves; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." "Edify one another," ſays Paul. "Let each man pleaſe his neighbour." "Regard not every man his own things merely, but every man alſo the things of others." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt." "Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as God for Chriſt's ſake has forgiven you."



Discourse X.

The Third and Fourth Trials of Abraham.

HEB. XI. 11, 12, 17—19.

Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed. Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, ſo many as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea ſhore innumerable. . . . . By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

IN theſe verſes we have a ſtatement of the two remaining trials of Abraham's faith. The laſt is of moſt importance. It is deſcribed as having conſtituted, in a peculiar ſenſe, the *teſt* of the principle. Abraham is ſaid *to have been tried*, when he

was called to offer up Iſaac upon the altar, as if all the demands previouſly made upon his faith were nothing in compariſon with this. The event was followed, alſo, by the Divine Being announcing, after the manner of men, that he regarded the conduct of the patriarch under it, as affording the higheſt poſſible demonſtration of his character. The former, however, as it was an actual part of the diſcipline through which Abraham had to paſs, and as it is more than once referred to as ſuch, both in the primitive hiſtory and the inſpired comment, obviouſly demands from us ſpecific attention. It ſhould be remembered, too, that "*whatever* was written," or whatever recorded, "by inſpiration of God," was given for ſome wiſe and holy purpoſe, and contains in it ſome bleſſing, which it is the wiſdom of the church to diſcover and enjoy.

When Abraham was promiſed, as a perſonal poſſeſſion, the land of Canaan, he was alſo promiſed a numerous poſterity to whom it ſhould deſcend. Of this poſterity Sarah was to be the mother. That ſhe ſhould have a ſon was repeatedly announced; and, that from him ſhould gradually ariſe a great nation, was predicted with equal frequency and explicitneſs.

Now, that the patriarch received the promiſe of Canaan in a ſpiritual ſenſe, has been abundantly proved; and, therefore, it is at leaſt poſſible, that he might take the promiſe of poſterity in the ſame ſenſe: hence, he would regard himſelf not ſo much the father of a great family by the fleſh, as the ſpiritual father of all who ſhould imitate his faith. Still, as the promiſe of an inheritance *had* a temporal ſenſe, and was actually to receive fulfilment upon earth; and, as in that ſenſe alſo, it was, no doubt, underſtood by the patriarch: ſo, whatever might be his anticipations of a ſpiritual ſeed, a natural offspring was equally expected. He ſeems often to have revolved in his mind the various intimations that had been given concerning it. His heart throbbed at times with an unutterable feeling, and his ſenſibility was ruffled by many a wave of pleaſure, as he

he contemplated the greatneſs and diſtinction which ſeemed prepared to deſcend, in future ages, upon his favoured poſterity.

His faith, however, was tried in two ways. The promiſe was repeatedly given, but for many years was never fulfilled. This long diſappointment ſeems to have affected him deeply, and to have prompted, at one period, a melancholy appeal to the Divine Being, when he graciouſly condeſcended to appear to the patriarch. The voice of Jehovah was heard falling on his ear with the moſt animating aſſurance, "fear not, Abraham, I am thy ſhield and thy exceeding great reward;" but, it appears at firſt to have fallen in vain. He was abſorbed, at the moment, by contemplating the myſterious and ſolitary circumſtances in which he ſtood; and inſtead of receiving the annunciation with feelings of elevated joy, his reply indicated that he was ſuffering from what he regarded as a peculiar calamity. Oh, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?—Behold, to me thou haſt given no ſeed: and, lo, one born in my houſe is mine heir." The graciouſneſs of the Almighty was eminently conſpicuous in the manner in which he received this complaint. The complaint indicated a want of confidence in the Divine promiſe, and diſplayed ſomething like diſſatisfaction with the Divine procedure: but, without noticing this, God at once re-aſſerted his intentions reſpecting him; and, ſtill farther to encourage his faith, commanded him to look upon the heavens, and to obſerve in the multitude of the ſtars, the image of his offspring. It ſeems not improbable, that by this was intended to be conveyed, not merely the idea of number, but of glory, elevation, and magnificence.

A ſtill farther proof, however, was to be given by Abraham of his confidence in the power and veracity of God. Hitherto the promiſe had been indefinite as to time, and demanded, ſo to ſpeak, no pre-eminent exerciſe of faith, as it involved nothing ſupernatural. The trial had conſiſted, ſimply in the

length

length of the period during which the completion of the promiſe was deferred, the diſappointment of a ſtrong inſtinct, and the apparent contradiction that ſeemed to exiſt, between the ultimate proſpects deſcribed by the promiſe, and the actual facts of his own hiſtory. At length, however, when a definite period for its accompliſhment was fixed, faith of a higher order was demanded. This excited, at firſt, heſitation and ſurpriſe, and ſomething like unbelief, though not really ſo;—not really ſo, for, neither of the parties having contemplated anything ſupernatural, it did not immediately occur to them, and hence their recorded expreſſions and conduct. When it did occur, we find it was inſtantly admitted. They remembered the infinitude of the Divine power, and their general view of the attribute came to the aſſiſtance of their faith in a ſpecific aſſurance; and thus the principle which had ſuffered a ſort of momentary obſcuration, immediately emerged again and appeared with increaſed purity and luſtre. Of the one it is ſaid, "ſhe judged him faithful, who had promiſed,"—that is, ſhe judged him "worthy to be truſted;" ſhe reaſoned upon his character and nature, and ſaw the perfect propriety of placing in his word unlimited dependance. Of the other it is ſaid, ſtill more emphatically, in the Epiſtle to the Romans, "he conſidered not"—he would not allow himſelf to advert to natural impoſſibility; "he ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God, through unbelief; and, being fully perſuaded that what he had promiſed he was able to perform, he was thus ſtrong in faith, and gave glory to God."

2.

UPON this part of the hiſtory of theſe two ſervants of God, we ſhall only ſubmit to you two obſervations. The firſt is reſpecting her, who is virtually denominated by Peter, the mother of the faithful. That ſhe did exert faith, we have ſeen; but

but that this was after ſome indication of weakneſs, muſt unqueſtionably be admitted. With all the weakneſs, however, which in this and other inſtances we are in the habit of attributing to Sarah, it may be worth remarking, that in the only two places in which ſhe is referred to in the New Teſtament, ſhe is mentioned with approbation and reſpect. The Apoſtles paſs over her deficiencies, and fix only on thoſe features of her character, which diſplayed her humility, faith, and general excellence. Here, then, is a manifeſtation of the Chriſtian ſpirit, which we, perhaps, would do well to imitate. How very oppoſite to this is, frequently, the conduct, not to ſay of men, but of Chriſtians! What a fine faculty ſome people have for detecting and dilating upon the weakneſſes of their brethren—or what they may deem weakneſſes, from not having the power, perhaps, to underſtand or appreciate the character to which they attach! How utterly blind you will find many perſons, to all that is good and great in the mind or conduct of a given individual, but moſt admirably acute, in obſerving the little ſhades and ſpots by which ſuch excellence is occaſionally obſcured! The moral taſte, in theſe caſes, ſeems to be completely perverted; inſtead of deriving delight from the perception of moral beauty, it turns away from it, as if its preſence were incompatible with pleaſure, and finds its moſt exquiſite enjoyment to conſiſt in the contemplation of deformity or defect. Such a ſtate of mind is highly unbecoming the profeſſors of that faith; which inculcates a charity "that thinketh no evil," "that rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," that is to cover, not only a few failings, but even "a multitude of ſins."

The knowledge of this tendency in human nature, to expatiate upon the errors, rather than the excellence, of character and conduct, ought to produce a twofold effect upon us. In the firſt place, it ought to make us watchful over ourſelves, leſt *we* give way to it; leſt we forget the example of theſe apoſtolic men, and are tempted to give prominence and

perpetuity

perpetuity to what we ſhould forget rather than remember. In every Chriſtian we may find ſomething to eſteem and love,—ſomething, perhaps, even, to reprove us,—if we ſincerely look for it. Even in an obvious fault committed by a brother, we may diſcover ſome palliating circumſtance; ſomething which, to *us*, at leaſt, ought to be an apology, and which it ſhould afford us ſincere gratification to obſerve. In caſes where ſome weakneſs is ſeen in connection with unqueſtionable virtue, let us try to hide the diſcovery even from ourſelves; but, above all things, let us not willingly aſſiſt the perſpicacity of others. The detection of defects in a character of great and general excellence, will occaſion to a benevolent mind ſomething like ſorrow, which will hope that others may not poſſeſs the ſame unfortunate quickneſs of diſcernment, and which will expreſs itſelf in private by interceſſion and prayer. Theſe are the diſpoſitions which it becomes us to cultivate, rather than thoſe to which we have been adverting; which are indulged at the expenſe of Chriſtian conſiſtency, and yield nothing but a malignant and deſpicable pleaſure. In the ſecond place; this ſubject ought to induce a ſpirit of *caution* in our general intercourſe, leſt we afford ground for this tendency in others to operate upon *us*. I do not like to teach the leſſon, and yet I know ſome one muſt teach it, that young and ingenuous minds muſt learn occaſionally to act with greater reſerve, than the heart would naturally dictate, or than human ſociety would demand, if all were what they appear to be, or what they profeſs. Let the young, then, be admoniſhed not to calculate too largely upon the benevolent judgments of others. You will have to learn to put a reſtraint upon what may appear ſome of your beſt feelings, and to ſuſpect, at times, where you would willingly confide. Many who are forward in actually leading you into occaſional or partial improprieties, will be among the firſt to expoſe or reprehend them. Inſtead of imitating the Apoſtles, as in the caſe of Sarah, and ſinking defects in conſideration of acknowledged and obvious excellence, they will employ

employ theſe—theſe very defects, for which they themſelves are partly accountable, as arguments to deſtroy the reputation, and darken the luſtre of that excellence itſelf! I know ſuch a repreſentation of human nature as this is repugnant to inexperience, but it is juſt; if you chooſe to neglect it, or to laugh at the leſſons it would teach, why, of courſe, you may; but you will ſuffer for it; and you will probably have its truth forced at laſt upon your attention, by the moſt painful and the moſt mortifying of all demonſtrations. We may apply to this ſubject what is ſaid of our Lord, though without affirming that we uſe the paſſage in its primary acceptation,—"he did not commit himſelf to them, for he knew what was in man." There is here much practical wiſdom to guide us in our commerce with the world. "He did not commit himſelf to them." He never ſpake or acted without remembering that tendency of our nature to which we are referring. He never deviated, for a moment, from that high-toned conſiſtency of ſpeech and behaviour, which defied the penetration of the moſt quick-ſighted cenſorioufneſs. *He* never made demands upon the charity and candour of others! he was too well aware of the little of either he ſhould find upon the earth, and, therefore, he was enabled to appeal to thoſe, among whom he had mingled with ſuch wiſe and ſcrupulous circumſpection, "*which of you convinceth me of ſin?*"

The next obſervation may refer to the object of the Divine proceedings towards Abraham, intended to be accompliſhed by this trial. Abraham *felt* the trial. By many facts and circumſtances recorded reſpecting him, he is evinced to have been a perſon of exquiſite ſenſibility. What to *him* were the multitude of his flocks and herds, his opulence and ſervants? What the reſpect which came gradually to be paid to him by ſurrounding princes? He was not ambitious, but he *was* poſſeſſed of warm and ſtirring affections, and his hope had been excited by the promiſe and the proſpect of an object upon which he might pour the whole tide of his nature's tenderneſs, and from the very

ſight of which he would derive a thrill of new and incommunicable joy!—yet was he diſappointed—diſappointed in this very property of his mind in which he was moſt ſenſibly alive. He might wonder at times at the fact, and be at a loſs on what principle to account for the conduct of Providence. His faith would aſſure him that there was ſome principle by which the whole could be explained, though his limited reaſon was unable to diſcover it. We, however, by having the whole of his hiſtory before us, can perceive, ſo to ſpeak, ſome of the ſecret reaſons upon which God acted. At the very moment when he was diſappointing the patriarch with reſpect to his affections as a man, he was operating on the growth and maturity of his character as a ſaint. By the very means which delayed his becoming the father of the natural family, he was rendering him the father of the faithful. He could not, in fact, have been the one, without ſuffering the trial which he did in the ſenſibilities of the other. It was a neceſſary part of the proceſs by which he was to be perfected.—Now, it becomes us to remember, that, this may often, in effect, be the caſe with ourſelves. We cannot poſſibly underſtand all the reaſons of God's dealings towards us. The very thing which we feel to be a trial, may be the only means by which we could be brought to anything like ſpiritual maturity. And the very thing which we wiſh for, with the moſt reſtleſs and paſſionate ſolicitude, may juſt be that thing which, if it were given, would completely obſtruct the progreſs of holineſs within us. Hence, in reflecting upon the myſterious aſpect which the ways of Providence frequently aſſume, it will be well to recollect, that there muſt be reaſons in the mind of God, perfectly ſatisfactory to *his* wiſdom, and that, therefore, they would be ſatisfactory to ours, if we knew them;—that theſe reaſons, whatever they are, muſt certainly have a regard to our good, becauſe they muſt have a regard to our virtue;—and that, the time of ignorance and anxiety cannot be long, for, either circumſtances will evolve which will plainly interpret the proceſs, which will diſtinctly

diſtinctly teach us *why* we ſuffered ſuch and ſuch things,—or, if not—if even they remain myſterious to the laſt, yet, "what we know not now, we ſhall know hereafter."

3.

FROM theſe reflections we proceed to the other and laſt trial of Abraham's faith. The circumſtances connected with this were of ſuch an extraordinary nature, and the feelings attending it, in the mind of the patriarch, muſt have been ſo deep and agitating, that we have no hope, by any deſcription of ours, to convey an adequate idea either of their variety or intenſeneſs. The account in the book "Geneſis," of this ſingular tranſaction, is given with ſuch inimitable ſimplicity, that it ſeems like profanation to attempt to deſcribe it in any words but thoſe furniſhed by Scripture. Here permit me to notice one of the peculiarities of the ſacred volume. It ſtates facts, but it does not deſcribe feeling. It occaſionally informs us of the outward and viſible ſigns of excited emotion, but it does not ſpend time in any copious delineation of emotion itſelf. This circumſtance gives to many parts of Scripture a power and a pathos of the moſt touching and intereſting order. The writers never aim at producing effect, or exciting ſenſibility; they ſimply detail facts and appearances; but this very abſence of all laborious effort and all obvious appeal, goes directly to the heart, and produces, in a mind of unſophiſticated feeling, ſuch a throbbing emotion as language was never able nor even intended to deſcribe. Hence, however, it frequently happens, that when a paſſage of ſacred hiſtory, univerſally felt to be peculiarly affecting, is expanded with the illuſtrations, and expreſſed in the language, of a printed or ſpoken expoſition, its whole force and impreſſion appear utterly to evaporate, and we are left wondering how it is, that what had ſo often

impreſſed us, and from which we expected ſo much, ſhould have paſſed away without producing anything like an adequate or even ordinary intereſt. But this is eaſily explained. A preacher, by the expoſition of a narrative unuſually pathetic, will, in all probability, fail to produce any impreſſion ſuperior to what attends the ſimple reading of the text; for, all his audience have hearts as well as himſelf, and to theſe the inimitable language of Scripture has already appealed, and excited, perhaps, all the emotion of which the heart is capable. That emotion is not to be deſcribed, for words cannot deſcribe the operations of ſenſibility. It is not to be increaſed, ſhould the preacher attempt it, for all he can ſay is already in the mind of the hearer; and though the hearer could not, perhaps, expreſs it in words, he can feel and enjoy it in itſelf. The ſlow progreſs of language is outſtripped by the rapidity of thought. A ſingle word will open a ſtream of ideas, or give riſe to an inſtantaneous flow of feeling, which it is luxury to indulge in the ſilent poſſeſſion of the ſoul, but the very charm of which will be deſtroyed and diſſipated by the intruſion of multiplied expreſſion. Every attempt, in fact, of ſuch intruſion will look like an impertinence. It is no wonder, therefore, that we find, at the cloſe of a lengthened expoſition of ſome touching incident, that we never before *felt* ſo little of its power to affect us, though we never before heard ſo much effort employed in deſcribing it.

With this preliminary caution, both to myſelf and you, I will now very briefly notice the laſt trial of Abraham, which iſſued in the complete triumph of that faith for which he is ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. The nature and order of our remarks will be determined by the nature and courſe of the narrative in Geneſis. As our obſervations proceed, your eye had better ſlowly paſs over the contents of the twenty-ſecond chapter of that book.

You will do well to notice, in the firſt place, the *time* when this trial occurred to the patriarch, as indicated by the language of

of the hiſtorian. "It came to paſs, after theſe things, that God did tempt Abraham." "*After theſe things*,"—after *what* things? Why, after waiting twenty-five years for the fulfilment of the promiſe; after actually receiving that fulfilment; after parting with one ſon whom he greatly loved; after the other had arrived at an age approaching maturity, afforded promiſes of early excellence, and become the object of abſorbing affection. After Abraham had received the congratulations of neighbouring chiefs, entered into treaties of amity with them, and ſeemed to be enjoying ſomething like repoſe, ſomething like reward for previous ſuffering. The ſpirit of a man may ſink under any great or protracted affliction, but the effect is incalculably worſe, when, after ſeeming to have recovered, he finds himſelf thrown back again by an unexpected relapſe. The want of any bleſſing, however much deſired, may be borne, at laſt, without pain: but when we firſt wait for it till the ſoul almoſt faints under hope long deferred; when we then poſſeſs it, exult in the enjoyment, and taſte the pleaſures we had otherwiſe not known; and when, after this, it is to be given up, and we are to go back to our former ſtate of entire deſtitution,—then it is that the mind experiences the pang of hopeleſs and complicated calamity.

You may obſerve, too, the ſhock which the annunciation of the Divine will was likely to produce, both on his affection and his faith. As a father and a ſaint he was equally tried. The very command is conveyed in ſuch a manner, as to ſtrike, as it proceeded, deeper and deeper into the ſenſibilities of the heart. "Abraham, take—thy *ſon*;—thine *only* ſon;—*Iſaac*;—*whom thou loveſt*." It is allowable to ſuppoſe, that when the commencement of this addreſs firſt fell upon the ear of Abraham, his heart dilated with joy, and his countenance brightened with pleaſure. He would naturally imagine that ſome gracious communication was about to be made reſpecting this child of promiſe, this ſon of his age, this ſelected pledge of a vaſt and diſtinguiſhed progeny. The thought of the parent would, in a

moment

moment perhaps, be, that he and his ſon were to proceed to ſome place where both were to be favoured with diſcoveries of the achievements and the glory of that nation to proceed from them, or to receive ſome communication from "the Father of lights," that ſhould enlarge their knowledge, and purify their nature. No. "Go offer him for a burnt offering." "Commit the work to no other hand; prepare thyſelf to be the prieſt, while he is the victim." To attempt to deſcribe the effect of this upon the man would be abſurd, becauſe it would be uſeleſs. The thing is impoſſible. We ſhall only obſerve, therefore, that his *affection* was tried as Iſaac was his *ſon;* but his *faith* was tried as he was the ſon of the *promiſe.* This was he by whom all the previous aſſurances of Jehovah reſpecting his family, on which he had depended for years, were to be fulfilled and ſubſtantiated! When he had to part with Iſhmael, to part with him merely by ſending him away, God condeſcended to aſſign a reaſon and to ſuggeſt a motive to promote his obedience, ſaying, that *he* was not the child of promiſe, and therefore might be given up; but here there is no reaſon aſſigned, no motive ſuggeſted; this *is* the child of promiſe, he who before was repreſented as a ſufficient ſubſtitute for the loſs of Iſhmael; but if Iſaac is to periſh, who is to become a ſubſtitute for *him?*

The conduct of Abraham under this extraordinary trial is next to be noticed. You can eaſily imagine how affection might prompt unbelief, and how both might concur, either to retard or fruſtrate any intention of obedience. He might doubt whether it *were* the voice of God; whether he had heard the words aright; whether he had not miſtaken their import. He might reaſon upon the impoſſibility of the command proceeding from God, both from its oppoſition to the Divine nature, and its inconſiſtency with the Divine promiſe. All this he might certainly do, but it is not ſaid, nor is it inſinuated, that he did it. It is rather intimated that he immediately recognized the voice, and prepared for prompt and decided obedience. What

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an aſtoniſhing inſtance is this of the power of piety to render every paſſion and feeling ſubordinate to duty and to God! Abraham was called, ſo to ſpeak, to a ſacrifice of himſelf, as well as of his ſon. He had to ſubdue ſome of the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of which the heart is ſuſceptible,—and he *did* ſubdue them. This, you will obſerve, is very different from the extinction of the paſſions; very different from either natural or induced inſenſibility. If the paſſions were extinguiſhed, we might be without feeling, and therefore in trial we ſhould be without pain; or rather, trial itſelf would be impoſſible. But to retain the paſſions, and yet to ſubdue them; to feel that the affections may be cultivated, and their pleaſures approved, and yet to preſerve them ſubordinate to duty, or, at the command of God, to relinquiſh the objects to which they cling with intenſe pertinacity,—this is religion; it is to be aſſimilated to Him whoſe ſoul was exquiſitely ſuſceptible, but who calmly ſaid, under accumulated ſuffering, "If this cup may not paſs from me,—thy will be done."

Abraham inſtantly prepared for his journey. And here there are two circumſtances from which inſtruction may be drawn. The firſt is, Early the very next morning he departed. What a view this gives us of his prompt attention to the Divine will. When Lot was commanded to leave Sodom,—to eſcape for his life,—to ſecure his perſonal ſafety, he clung to and lingered about the place, which he ſeems to have forſaken with regret: the angels had to interpoſe and to compel him to proceed, by taking hold of his hand, and forcing him from deſtruction. But Abraham diſplayed a readineſs in obeying a command of a far different nature; conduct this, to which no motive could urge, but one ariſing from the determination of univerſal obedience. The other circumſtance is, that the patriarch does not ſeem to have informed Sarah of the peculiar trial to which he was called; nor did he permit the young men to accompany him to the place of ſacrifice: leaving them behind, he and his ſon went forward alone to the awful and tremendous duty.

Now,

Now, from theſe two things you may learn, *firſt*, that if ever you are called to the diſcharge of any painful act, the more ſpeedily you ſet about it the better; a difficult duty becomes ten times more difficult by procraſtination; your fears multiply; your heſitation increaſes; your reſolution fluctuates, till at length, perhaps, it entirely ſubſides, and leaves you the victim of laſting regret. The other leſſon is this. If your own mind is perfectly made up as to the propriety of doing ſomething that requires great determination, and from which feeling may be in danger of ſeducing you; perform it without conſulting others, or permitting their interference, as it is poſſible they may exert ſuch a power over ſenſibility, as entirely to fruſtrate your purpoſe, even though your conviction may continue the ſame. The ſtrength of the mind is in danger of being ſubdued by the ſoftneſs of the heart. We may internally condemn ourſelves at the very moment we yield to their influence. All this, however, may be avoided, by firſt fixing, like Abraham, our firm determination in conſequence of our conviction of duty, and then carrying it out into accompliſhment, without expoſing ourſelves to thoſe influences, by which feeling might be taught to riſe up in oppoſition to the judgment.

The perfect calmneſs which diſtinguiſhed the conduct of Abraham, is worthy particular remark. There is nothing here like turbulent excitement; nothing like the impetuoſity of paſſion; nothing like enthuſiaſm. It is not the blind impulſe of fierce and fanatic feeling, trampling equally upon the underſtanding and the heart. Devotees have often expoſed both themſelves and their offspring to the moſt ſtrange and terrible inflictions, but it has generally been with ſomething like frenzy or deſperation. Here, however, there is nothing of this nature. There is the calm, rational, and dignified deportment of a man conſcious that he is diſcharging ſome great duty, believed to be conſiſtent with ſupreme wiſdom, though both myſterious and agonizing to himſelf. Nor was this ſtoical inſenſibility or Roman pride. His anſwer to the pointed queſtion of Iſaac, is

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as much diſtinguiſhed for its mild affection, as for its wiſe evaſion of direct reply. It is not the language either of enthuſiaſm or ſternneſs. And he had no motive to the mere diſplay of heroic hardihood. When Brutus condemned his two ſons to death, the pride of unbending virtue could be gratified by the wondering admiration of the people. But here, the only witneſſes that could have been preſent were purpoſely prevented approaching, as if to mark both the feeling and the firmneſs of the man. It was not paſſion but principle,—and therefore he *needed* no witneſſes to ſtimulate and reward him. It was not inſenſibility,—and therefore he *would not have* witneſſes, leſt they ſhould ſtrengthen the emotion he felt throbbing within him, and interfere with the ultimate execution of his purpoſe. With the moſt perfect compoſure he ſelected the ſpot, conſtructed the altar, laid the wood in order upon it, and then—"ſtretched forth his hand, and took the knife to ſlay his ſon." At that moment the angel of God arreſted the ſtroke, and the tranſaction concluded by the releaſe of Iſaac and the renewal of the promiſes.

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THE faith of Abraham, in the courſe of this great trial, would ſeem to have conſiſted in this:—He was called to ſacrifice his ſon, and he determined to do it; but, this ſon was given by promiſe, and was given expreſſly as the root of a great nation; this *promiſe* Abraham continued to believe, even at the time when he was preparing to obey the *command;* he did not doubt that this very Iſaac, who was going "like a lamb to the ſlaughter," even if ſlaughtered, would ſtill be the means of fulfilling the Divine aſſurances. He knew God to be faithful; he knew he could not lie; he believed, therefore, that he would furniſh ſome means, whatever they might be, of harmonizing the contradictory duties to which he was called. The patriarch

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might poſſibly hope that God would interfere to prevent the completion of the fatal act, or to interrupt the progreſs of the preparatory proceedings. I rather think, however, that his mind moſt ſtrongly dwelt upon the idea of Iſaac being actually offered and actually reſtored to life. This ſeems obviouſly the meaning of the Apoſtle. "He that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: *accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead.*" The ſtruggle in the mind of the patriarch, would be between his general knowledge of this power on the part of God, and his expectation of its exerciſe in this particular caſe. It is intimated, that, whatever might be at firſt the ſuggeſtions of affection or weakneſs, this expectation roſe ſuperior to them all. He continued to feel firmly perſuaded that the promiſes he had received *would* be fulfilled; that they would be fulfilled in and by Iſaac: and that, He who had directed the myſterious act which he was about to accompliſh, would make its performance conſiſtent with a confidence in His previous prediction. This is emphatically "againſt hope, believing in hope;" truſting to eternal truth, in ſpite of apparent phyſical impoſſibilities.

Such was the triumph of faith in this diſtinguiſhed ſaint. He was rewarded in a manner proportioned to the luſtre of the achievement. He *did*, in a figure, receive Iſaac from the dead; whence, indeed, he had, as it were, received him at firſt. The offering was virtually made; ſo far as intention and feeling were concerned it was complete; then Jehovah interpoſed, pronounced himſelf ſatisfied of the patriarch's principle, from the evidence afforded by the patriarch's obedience, and gave him his ſon back again, to his warm, and beating, and burſting heart. Then, too, the Lord repeated to Abraham the promiſe of glory and diſtinction to his ſeed; and, moſt likely, enabled him, in ſome meaſure, to look forward to the time, when "Meſſiah" ſhould aſcend Calvary, bearing his croſs, and prepared "to give his life a ranſom for many." That this true ſacrifice,

ſacrifice, which the Lord ultimately provided, was typified in this ſingular tranſaction, appears extremely probable. Every circumſtance ſeems ſignificant, every object ſymbolical, and all moſt beautifully harmonize with the fact when the great purpoſe of God was actually fulfilled. After ſo remarkable an engagement, it ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that Abraham received the moſt ſpecific information he ever poſſeſſed, of the New Teſtament diſcoveries. How far this went, it is impoſſible to ſay. That ſomething, however, was known, muſt be admitted. Our Lord himſelf aſſerts it reſpecting the patriarch. At this moment, probably, occurred what he ſtated concerning him; "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw it, and was glad.*"

We ſhall cloſe the preſent diſcourſe with one general remark. —Abraham had an unqueſtionable and direct command from God for what he undertook; the act, therefore, was not only not ſinful, but virtuous. It is our happineſs not to be required to ſhow our obedience in this way. With reſpect to us, according to the expreſſion of the prophet, "it is what God commanded not, neither came it into his heart." We ſhould remember, however, that he does command us to deliver up the objects of our ſtrongeſt attachments, whenever he ſees fit to recall them by death. We muſt be ready to obey. He does not require it to be done without feeling, but he does require it to be done without a murmur. We are at liberty to ſorrow; but in the midſt of that ſorrow, faith is not only to teach us ſubmiſſion, but to change ſubmiſſion into acquieſcence, to expand acquieſcence into approval, and to enable us to repeat "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord."—It is worthy of remark, too, that, when we either too earneſtly deſire any particular bleſſing, or too fondly prize it if it be poſſeſſed, God frequently withholds or threatens to remove it, till we exhibit in *our* will ſomething like coincidence with his,—till we give up, either the idolatrous wiſh or the idol itſelf; and when he has brought us to that,—

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brought us, like Abraham, to be ready to ſacrifice every thing to Him,—then, perhaps, he will confer or continue the very bleſſings themſelves; becauſe he ſees they will now occupy that place, and that place only, to which alone all ſecondary objects are entitled. The way, in fact, really to enjoy temporal bleſſings, is to give them to God; to regard them as his property rather than our own; when we have preſented them, in a manner, to Him, and have received them back with privilege to uſe them, they are felt to be objects of ſacred intereſt, are ſources of purified ſatisfaction, and become means of improvement as well as inſtruments of pleaſure.

Discourse xi.

General Character of Abraham.

HEB. xi. 8—19.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed. Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, ſo many as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea ſhore innumerable. Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity

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to have returned. But now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

THE whole of this paſſage, extending from the eighth to the nineteenth verſes of the chapter, and containing the Apoſtle's account of the faith of Abraham, has been regularly expounded in the compaſs of four diſcourſes. In the firſt of theſe we remarked, that, in our preſent attention to the hiſtory of theſe eminent men, whoſe names Paul has introduced into his argument, it is with the manifeſtations of their faith that we have to do, and not with every circumſtance which the hiſtorian may have recorded reſpecting them. We pretend not to ſay all that might be ſaid, and all that it would be proper to ſay, in a ſeries of biographical diſcourſes founded upon the Old Teſtament; but only to illuſtrate the operations of that one great principle, which conſtitutes, in a religious ſenſe, the foundation of character; and, from the diſplay of its ſtrength, and the contemplation of its triumphs, to appeal practically to you, that you may be excited to act as the "followers of thoſe, who through faith and patience are inheriting the promiſes."

In this way, and for this purpoſe, we have brought before you ſo much of the hiſtory as was neceſſary to illuſtrate the faith of Abraham. That faith was matured and perfected by a ſeries of trials, ſome of which were of long duration, extending through ſeveral years, and requiring, to a certain extent, the uninterrupted exerciſe of the principle: others were ſhorter, but more intenſe, demanding, for a ſeaſon, the ſtrongeſt conceivable

ceivable degree of it. All of theſe are noticed in the argument of the Apoſtle, and all of them have been illuſtrated in our expoſition of that argument. We ſaw the prompt obedience of the patriarch, when called to leave the land of his birth, and the ſcene of his early aſſociations; we followed him when, as a ſtranger and pilgrim, he ſojourned in the promiſed country, diſplaying his faith by looking beyond it to a better and more enduring inheritance; we ſaw him ſuſtain, during a protracted period, a diſappointment at once painful to nature and myſterious to faith; and, finally, we ſtood by him upon the mount, beheld him prepared to ſacrifice that ſon by whom the promiſes were to find their accompliſhment, and witneſſed the complete triumph of the principle, in his continued and confident expectation of the fulfilment of theſe promiſes, even though he ſhould actually offer his ſon upon the altar, for he ſtill "accounted him faithful who had promiſed," and "believed him to be able to raiſe up Iſaac again from the dead, from whence he alſo received him in a figure."

From each of theſe trials of Abraham, we endeavoured to deduce, as we proceeded, ſuch inſtruction as they appeared reſpectively calculated to convey; hence, the whole of what we project in theſe diſcourſes, reſpecting each character, may be regarded as accompliſhed with reſpect to him. We admit, therefore, that our notice of the patriarch might here entirely ceaſe, without being chargeable with any deficiency, ſo far as the exhibition of the Apoſtle's argument is concerned. We are diſpoſed to believe, however, that you will not object to accompany us in a more minute examination of the conduct and character of this admirable man. We dwell upon his hiſtory longer, it is probable, than we ſhall upon that of any other of whom mention will be made. And there ſeems a propriety in this, from the conſpicuous place he occupies in the hiſtory of the church, from the peculiarity of his trials, from the ſtupendous power of his faith under ſome of them, and from

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the relation which he bears to believers in all ages, being denominated "the father of the faithful," and ſtanding out in the Word, as diſplaying, in the principle for which he is diſtinguiſhed, an intended example to them that ſhould believe.

In what has been already attempted, we have obſerved ſome of the moſt prominent features of the patriarch's character, as we have ſeen him in ſome of the moſt extraordinary moments of his life. We have examined the foundation on which his character was built, and we have ſeen, if we may ſo ſpeak, ſome of the ſubſtantial materials,—ſome of the beams and pillars of which that noble erection was compoſed; but we have not ſeen many of the minute ornaments, the nice and delicate touches, by which its more elegant parts were embelliſhed and beautified. Character, we ſhould remember, is not *all* evolved by extraordinary ſituations; and, indeed, in ſome caſes, a judgment can be but imperfectly formed reſpecting it, if excluſively ſeen under this aſpect. On great occaſions, perſons may be brought up to the performance of what ſhall command admiration; we may follow them into other circumſtances, and not only witneſs nothing to ſuſtain the ſentiment, but nothing to inſpire confidence or love. We may ſee, at ſome peculiar ſeaſon, what a man is *capable* of, what he can do, when, with a determined mind, he either bears up under aggravated trial, or accompliſhes ſome reſolute purpoſe. But character, to be truly great, needs to be uniform and conſiſtent; it is that which is habitual; which is ſeen to prompt and preſide in ordinary duty as well as in remarkable emergencies. And character, to be complete, requires the beautiful and the ſoft, as well as the impoſing; it ſhould have grace in combination with ſtrength; it ſhould diſplay the attractive and the lovely, as well as the ſublime. Let it have the devotion inſpired by faith, the firmneſs preſcribed by principle, the noble attitude of a high-toned and unimpeachable honour; let it have all this, and we will give it the tribute of our homage, and acknowledge its obvious ſuperiority, but ſtill

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we want ſomething more,—we want ſomething to engage the heart as well as to ſecure the underſtanding; ſomething to love as well as to reſpect; we want the bland and courteous demeanour; we want "grace poured into the lips;" we want to loſe the awe inſpired by the ſtrength of virtue, while liſtening to the voice and luxuriating in the view of her tenderneſs. We want, in ſhort, the union of all that is firm in principle, and all that is fervent in piety, and all that is commanding in worth,—with whatever is attractive in manners or amiable in feeling; and with all that can ſweeten, and ſoothe, and ſatisfy, in the contact of ordinary intercourſe.

Now, we do not ſay that we ſhall find *all* this in the moral portrait of Abraham; but we do ſay that we ſhall find a great deal of it. That he committed errors and had his faults, is only ſaying that he was a man; but that theſe bore no proportion to the diverſified excellence of his character, and the eminent purity of his life, is manifeſt from the whole tenour of his hiſtory. He deſerves diſtinction, not only for that faith from which ſuch a ſtrong and ſteady light is caſt upon his memory; but for various delicacies of mind and feeling which ſurround it with a beautiful and ſoftened effulgence. Theſe, indeed, were the fruits of his faith. They were the diſplays of the principle which rendered him "the friend of God," called forth by the contact of its poſſeſſor with men. It was an active and practical power, prompting to univerſal obedience. It did not conſiſt in ſpeculative notions about the Divine attributes; nor in mere mental acquieſcence in the Divine procedure; nor in ſelfiſh acceptance of the Divine promiſes; nor in any other excluſively intellectual or internal act: but it conſiſted in the carrying out of every pulſation of the heart and every concluſion of the underſtanding, into the vigorous and conſcientious diſcharge of whatever it became him to regard, either as a ſervant of the true God, or as a man related to other men, to whom he owed, therefore, the diverſified expreſſions of ſocial morality.

We ſhall this morning direct your attention to ſome parts of the general character of Abraham; and to the improvement which it becomes us to derive from his example.

As, however, we hinted juſt now, that the patriarch "committed errors and had his faults," it may not be amiſs to advance a remark or two, firſt of all, reſpecting them. It is poſſible that even theſe may furniſh ſome leſſon worthy our remembrance.

The ſacred writer has recorded, that twice Abraham ſo far forgot, not only what was due to his character as a man, and to his profeſſion as a worſhipper of the living God; but alſo what was due to the expreſs aſſurances of that Being who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and whoſe promiſed protection, therefore, muſt be a ſufficient defence; as to ſtoop, if not to abſolute falſehood, certainly to ſomething not far ſhort of it. He employed equivocation; that is to ſay, he uſed language in one ſenſe, which he knew the perſon he addreſſed would take in another. He expreſſed a certain idea by his ſelected phraſeology, but he knew that was *not* the idea which his words would convey to the mind of Abimelech. Such conduct was neither religious nor manly. It was altogether inconſiſtent with his acknowledged character. It betrayed exceſſive puſillanimity. It was inſulting to that God in whom he profeſſed to confide, and from whom he had received ſuch repeated and ſuch explicit pledges of protection.

Now, obſerve the conſequences of this. Firſt. The very thing which he thought to avoid, happened; and it happened juſt *becauſe* he had employed a diſingenuous and crooked policy. Abimelech told him that it would not, or ſhould not, have occurred, had he been open and explicit from the firſt. And ſecondly. He was compelled to ſubmit to a rebuke from the lips of an idolatrous prince, when his criminality was diſcovered, and when he acknowledged the mean ſubterfuge to which he had deſcended. How humiliating was this! Nothing is more painful than to ſee perſons of eminent virtue brought, by the weakneſs

weakneſs of a moment, into ſuch circumſtances, that others, far leſs conſpicuous for character, can charge them, and charge them juſtly, with conduct unworthy of themſelves. Let us never forget, my brethren, that "the path of duty," of integrity and honour, "is the path of ſafety;" that any deviation from known and acknowledged principle; any deliberate violation of conſcience; any ſacrifice of truth, however apparently trivial; any attempt, in fact, to avoid danger by the employment of forbidden weapons and crooked devices,—will moſt likely end in diſappointment; will produce the very calamity we dread; and, what is far worſe than any calamity whatever, will expoſe us to the keen and cutting cenſure, if not to the indignant contempt, of men who deſpiſe our faith, but who know how to judge of propriety of feeling and rectitude of conduct.

Another imperfection in Abraham was the taking into his own hands, at the ſolicitation of Sarah, the fulfilment of the promiſe. Deſpairing of that promiſe being accompliſhed; anxious and diſcontented under the delay; he was prevailed upon, evidently without conſulting the Divine will, to employ a method, ſuggeſted by unbelief, and acquieſced in from weakneſs, in order to ſecure the bleſſing which was ſo long withheld. He received Hagar from the hand of his wife, with the intention and the hope of thus terminating the trial under which they lived, and realizing the promiſe upon which they depended. This fact exhibits, in a very ſtrong light, the danger in which our religion and character may be placed by the influence of intimate and endeared connections; and the neceſſity of guarding every avenue of the heart, through which principle might be too ſucceſsfully aſſailed. The conduct of Sarah and Abraham, in this inſtance, was characterized by extreme diſtruſt, by criminal impatience, and by exceſſive preſumption. Inſtead of reſting ſatisfied with the Divine declaration; inſtead of acquieſcing in whatever the Supreme Wiſdom preſcribed; inſtead of permitting that Wiſdom to accompliſh its own purpoſes in its own way; they muſt rebel againſt his govern-

ment, and attempt, by plans and methods of *theirs*, to obtain the bleſſing which they knew was promiſed, but which they unreaſonably doubted they were never to poſſeſs!—Now, what could be expected to reſult from ſuch unhallowed ſentiments and ſuch direct diſobedience? Nothing but ſuch conſequences as actually did reſult. In the firſt place, they were ſoon taught the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that they *could* counteract the intentions of God, or fulfil, in one way, any purpoſe of his, which he had determined to accompliſh in another. And, in the ſecond place, the very ſucceſs of their policy, ſo far as it did ſucceed, became the ſource of long and painful domeſtic diſquietude. Sarah was puniſhed by inſult from the very perſon ſhe had elevated. The father's heart claſped and clung to his child, and yet he was compelled to command his departure, and to ſnap ties that bound him tenderly to the boy. That very boy, at the birth of him who was the child of promiſe, mocked his pretenſions, and ridiculed the parental elation of feeling with which he was received. Thus, for many a year, did a ſingle act of preſumption and diſobedience give riſe to domeſtic infelicity, occaſion ſcenes of diſcord, and originate a chaſtiſement and a ſcourge by the very ſucceſs with which it ſeemed to be conſummated.

From this ſubject we may learn, Firſt. That impatience under Providence may lead us, in a moment of temptation, to preſume to take God's work out of his hand: but that, as ſure as ever we attempt any thing obviouſly wrong, under the pretence of accompliſhing what is right; or, as ſure as we adopt any doubtful expedient, without humbly ſeeking the Divine guidance and ſanction; ſo ſurely ſhall we lay the foundation, both for certain diſcomfiture, and ſubſequent puniſhment. Secondly. That, not only is every ſin the ſeed, ſo to ſpeak, of a puniſhment, but that, the puniſhment flowing from it by way of natural conſequence, may accompany us for years, or even for life, in ſpite both of repentance on our part and forgiveneſs on that of God. He will pardon our ſin, but he

he will not work a miracle to deſtroy its conſequences. Thirdly. We learn, that perſons, eminently diſtinguiſhed for ſome particular virtue, ſhould be particularly obſervant; for, it is moſt probable, that, if they fail at all, it will be juſt in that point where they are acknowledged to be ſtrongeſt. "The father of the faithful" erred, becauſe unbelief acquired a temporary predominance; and the boldeſt of all the Apoſtles ſank to the moſt daſtardly denial of his Lord. Fourthly. We may be encouraged under the recollection of conſcious defects, by knowing that the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſervants of God were not perfect; though we are to be warned alſo, that, if *they* had need of vigilance, much more we. Laſtly. We may notice that the expoſure, by the ſacred penmen, of the faults of their favourite characters, is a very ſtrong proof of fidelity. It ſeems to indicate that they did not invent, but record; that they deſcribed facts, and deſcribed them as they ſtood, without partiality, and without extenuation. It is a pledge for their honeſty therefore; and, if that be admitted, we know that as honeſt men they could never combine to impoſe a known ſyſtem of falſehood upon the world.

Let us now proceed to notice ſome of the ſpecific excellencies, by which Abraham was habitually characterized.

1. His piety and devotion. Theſe terms expreſs the frequent recollection of God, and attention to thoſe exerciſes by which the mind riſes to intercourſe with him. That Abraham was a devout man; and that this was diſplayed, both by his regard to poſitive acts of worſhip accompanied by external expreſſions of devotion, and by the prevailing habit of his mind, is evident from the general tenour of his life. He is expreſſly and beautifully denominated "the friend of God;" a title which implies congeniality and intercourſe. Friendſhip is never ſuſpected to exiſt between perſons, who, having conſtant opportunities of communion, are yet never known to avail themſelves of theſe. It is as certain, that the exiſtence of friendſhip will lead to the deſire and indulgence of intercourſe,

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as that any of the laws of nature will continue to operate as they have done ſince the creation. The propriety of the epithet, attached to the name of Abraham, could only be ſuſtained, by the fact of his daily recollection of God; his indulgence in devout meditation on the Divine perfections; his reference, in all things, to the Divine will; and his careful cultivation of that diſpoſition and temper, calculated to invite and ſecure his preſence. The ſituation and trials, in fact, of the patriarch, had a neceſſary tendency both to prompt and purify his devotion. How could *he* forget the Inviſible, who walked by faith, not by ſight? He might for a ſeaſon be ſeduced into ſuch ſurpriſing neglect; but the ſtate of mind would be unnatural, and he would ſoon be recalled, by palpable facts, to the renewed recollection of Him, whoſe hand was leading him from ſtation to ſtation, and whoſe exiſtence and character could alone interpret the ſucceſſive circumſtances in which he was involved.—As to poſitive acts of devotion and worſhip, we have ſeveral inſtances of ſuch beautifully introduced in the courſe of his hiſtory. Wherever he was honoured and refreſhed by a communication from God; wherever he pitched his tent and reſted for a ſeaſon; there did he erect an altar, in grateful remembrance of Divine mercy, and as a ſolemn pledge for religious obſervances. He was a man of prayer. With what inimitable ſimplicity is the fact ſtated by the hiſtorian, when he ſays, and ſays ſo often, "*then did Abraham call upon the name of the Lord.*" It was thus, that he both acknowledged his obligations to the protecting Power, and received ſupplies of invigorating ſtrength. It was by theſe exerciſes, that faith was nouriſhed and preſerved. The patriarch was thus brought into the preſence, and made increaſingly ſenſible of the agency, of that God on whom he depended. And it was thus, alſo, that faith was diſplayed; and that, too, both as "the perſuaſion of things not ſeen, and the expectation of things hoped for." He, whom Abraham addreſſed, and the world to which his mind was lifted, were things inviſible to ſenſe, the deep conviction

viction of whoſe reality led him to the act; while all his ſupplications, however they might be connected with his earthly pilgrimage, had a ſupreme reference to what he hoped for in that eternal city on which his faith terminated, and towards which he was anxious to preſs with undeviating aim.

As an improvement to this particular, ſuffer me to make at leaſt *three* remarks reſpecting the ſubject of which it treats. In the *firſt* place, I would take occaſion to notice the vaſt importance to be attached to habits of devotion, even upon the moſt general principles of moral reaſoning.—When we regard man in his relation to God, it would ſeem, that habits of devotion are as eſſential to virtue, as, when we regard him in relation to others, are habits of integrity and truth. All, therefore, who acknowledge the Divine exiſtence and government, but who neglect the cultivation of this part of character, are, upon their own profeſſions, defective in virtue. Hence, their proud appeals to their moral principles and conduct, and their equally proud dependence upon theſe, are rendered nugatory and falſe, by their criminal neglect of what even they, to be conſiſtent with themſelves, muſt acknowledge to be eſſential to virtuous character. Are they to ſuppoſe, then, that God will hold them guiltleſs, becauſe, while they have attended to the duties ariſing from their relations to men, they have neglected *only* thoſe which flow from their relations to Himſelf? In fact, the virtuous man of ſociety, believes and acts upon poſitions more irrational and abſurd, than were ever entertained by any religioniſt whatever. He believes, that God may be treated with ſuch indifference as he himſelf would reſent,—that he may have every juſt claim practically denied and regularly refuſed,—and yet, that he will reward the individual who does it, for his partial and imperfect diſcharge of inferior duties! That is to ſay, in other words, after committing the *wrong* of giving to others or to himſelf, that primary regard, which, of abſolute right, belongs to God, he expects God actually to ſanction and approve the *injuſtice*;—

I ſay

I ſay the injuſtice, for, ſtrange as it may ſeem, it is into this—into one of thoſe very crimes, on his freedom from which the virtuous man plumes himſelf, that all virtue, ſeparate from devotion, is ultimately to be reſolved.

Again. The pleaſures of devotion, (the phraſe, perhaps, is not quite accurate, it is however intelligible;) the pleaſures of devotion, if this were the proper opportunity, might be largely illuſtrated. It is ſurely to be expected that ſomething ſurpaſſing the ſatisfaction of all other enjoyments, ſhould attend the intercourſe of the ſoul with God. I ſuppoſe that in the experience of every Chriſtian, there have been moments, when, in ſome degree, this has been enjoyed: when the power of faith has been felt, in augmenting the impreſſion of the inviſible and the future; in exciting the feeling, and prompting the expreſſions, of holy confidence; in ſuſtaining the perſuaſion of pardon; and diffuſing through the ſoul what is emphatically denominated "*the peace of God.*" It is of more importance, however, to obſerve, that we ſhould nouriſh and animate our devotion, by frequently recollecting the fact of prayer being the means of our obtaining the *direct* beſtowment of bleſſings. We are not to be ſeduced "by philoſophy and vain deceit," by ſuggeſtions of "ſcience falſely ſo called," to imagine that all the advantage of prayer, conſiſts in its reflex operation on the mind. Nor are we to engage in the exerciſe itſelf, without aiming at ſuch a perfect conviction of the truth of God's promiſes, and the certainty of our being able to obtain direct and poſitive communications of good, as may raiſe us above the "wavering" of the "double-minded man," and enable us to offer "the prayer of faith." It is here, I ſuſpect, that Chriſtians are principally defective. They do not actually neglect prayer; but, they very often pray without any adequate impreſſion of the nature and power of the inſtrument they employ, and without the leaſt thought or belief of *really* "*having the things for which they aſk.*" It is ſurely as neceſſary, if not more ſo, that we pray in a right ſpirit as that we pray

pray at all. The ſpirit of faith—of "perfect perſuaſion and confident expectation,"—perſuaſion of the power of the means and expectation of the ſubſtance of the promiſe—this is that ſpirit. "Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs."

Still farther. In conſequence of our weakneſs, let us remember, that it becomes us to attach great importance, both to poſitive acts of devotion, and to habits of regularity in the proſecution of the duty. If ſocial engagements and public opportunities be given up; if the employment of language in private be thought unneceſſary; if no fixed and regular ſeaſons be regarded;—if, that is to ſay, any individual think lightly of ſuch means, as are evidently fitted to aid either the excitement or the expreſſion of devotion; and, if he profeſs to pray, only when he finds himſelf in a becoming frame; ſuch a perſon, I ſhould expect ſoon to hear, had quite ceaſed to pray at all. External acts and vocal expreſſions, tend to fix attention and warm the heart. The regular call of the hour of prayer reminds us of duty; breaks in upon ſecular aſſociations; forces us, ſo to ſpeak, to think of that world we are ſo liable to forget; and leads us into our chamber—to our Father who ſeeth in ſecret, and to whom, if the call came not, we might ceaſe to approach. The habit of attending to ſtated ſeaſons of devotion, ſhould be purſued in connection with that of paying a proper regard to thoſe occaſional frames of mind, in which we ſeem irreſiſtibly drawn, ſpontaneouſly prompted, to the ſublime and delightful duty. Neither habit ſhould be excluſively preferred, neither neglected. The one characterizes the ſlave of formality, the other the child of enthuſiaſm; it is the union of the two that ſeparates and diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian from both.

2. But, to return; we obſerve, in the ſecond place, that, in connection with this habit of elevated devotion by which Abraham was diſtinguiſhed from ſurrounding idolaters, he always manifeſted towards them, as men, the moſt reſpectful and courteous demeanour. There was nothing acrimonious or repulſive about

about his ſpirit and conduct. He does not ſeem to have ſuppoſed that he could either glorify God, or recommend his religion, by a gloomy, miſanthropic temper; by unamiable manners; by the ſwellings of ſpiritual pride, or the effuſions of ſpiritual aſperity. He was certainly reſpected, if not loved, by thoſe who ſurrounded him, and with whom he came in contact in the ordinary intercourſe of life; and this reſpect on their part, could only have been excited by correſponding behaviour on his; it was the reſpect, not of fear, but of admiration and affection; there was a good deal of tenderneſs about it; he and his neighbours entered into leagues of amity, and, when differences aroſe between them in conſequence of the conduct of their ſervants, there was no ſeizing upon them to emit the ſmothered feelings of pride or animoſity, but a candid and open explanation; a readineſs, on both ſides, to act with a ſolicitude to excel in reſpect, and to diſplay a confidence inſpired by eſteem.—What a perfect picture of the dignified and the beautiful of ſocial life, is preſented by the behaviour of Abraham to the ſons of Heth, when "he ſtood up from before his dead," and ſought to purchaſe a ſepulchre! They urged his acceptance of it as a gift, and urged it in language that indicated intimacy, "What is that between thee and us!" It is almoſt the language of friendſhip, and would never have been employed towards one who had been ſplenetic, repulſive, haughty, or reſerved. He did not and would not accept it on the terms propoſed; but, how did he expreſs this determination? not by a proud contempt of the manifeſted kindneſs, not by inſulting the men, as if he ſhould be contaminated by a contact with them or theirs; no: "*he bowed himſelf before the people of the land;*" he was firm, but he was reſpectful; he was reſolved to give the value of whatever he received, but he expreſſed his purpoſe in a manner that did honour to them as well as to himſelf. The men were not of his faith; they worſhipped not at the ſame altar; they poſſeſſed not the ſame privileges; but they were men; and, as ſuch, Abraham treated them

them with that civil reverence, that bland and becoming affability, which men as men owe to each other.

3. But, it is next to be obſerved, that this courteſy, on the part of the patriarch, never led to compliances or compacts inconſiſtent with his religious profeſſion. He was all that man could be, and all that man ought to be, to his fellows. Whatever was honourable, whatever was attractive, I imagine, appeared in Abraham towards his idolatrous neighbours. There was cordiality and kindneſs; there was the friendly and familiar interchange of good offices; but, there was not the ſanction of what was ſinful, nor the formation of ſuch intimate confederacies, as might lead either himſelf or his ſon to diſobey the Supreme law. Hence, though he lived on ſuch terms as we have deſcribed with the people of the land; though his devotion had nothing about it like morbid moroſeneſs; though, when neceſſary, he could mix and mingle in the world, without betraying anything like the proud feeling of perſonal degradation; yet, he would not on any account permit, that Iſaac ſhould take from among its families the wife of his boſom. His ſervant was ſolemnly commanded to prevent this, and was ſent to ſecure a more ſuitable alliance. Such was, at once, the manifeſtation, on the part of Abraham, of all that was amiable in the man, with all that was decided in the believer. He would not ſuffer ſuch a union between his family and thoſe of an erroneous faith, as would be diſpleaſing to God, and muſt neceſſarily endanger the principles and piety of his ſon. He would not do, that is to ſay, what was obviouſly ſinful or proſpectively pernicious; but, ſo far as ſocial intercourſe would be maintained free from this,—ſo far he was willing to maintain it; and ſo far he diſplayed towards thoſe, who, in a Chriſtian ſenſe would be ſaid to be without, whatever was eſtimable and attractive, ſo that he might properly be ſaid to have had "a good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf."

4. As the head of an extenſive houſehold, it is diſtinctly recorded

recorded of him, that he was ſolicitous about the religious character of all committed to his care. This teſtimony to Abraham was diſtinctly borne by Jehovah himſelf, when he appeared to him previous to the deſtruction of Sodom: "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do,—ſeeing that I know him,—that he will command his children and his houſehold after him, to keep the way of the Lord?" True faith will infallibly diſplay itſelf by inſpiring a religious concern for others, eſpecially for thoſe who, by nature or circumſtance, are placed under us, and for whoſe ſalvation we are partly reſponſible. It is to be feared, that, even among profeſſed believers, ſome parents are to be found, who are by no means ſufficiently concerned for their children; and many maſters, who never imagine for a moment that they have anything to do with the religion of their domeſtics. Abraham, however, thought otherwiſe; and hence, he is particularly diſtinguiſhed, by the Divine Being, for his conſcientious regard to the piety of his houſe. "Children are the heritage of the Lord;" they are his; minds which he has made for himſelf, but which for a ſeaſon he has committed to *you*; committed as a ſacred depoſit, to be watched over and preſerved, preparatory to that higher life which is their ultimate deſtination: He will hereafter require an account of your ſtewardſhip; awful diſcloſures will be made then; terrible will be the rebuke of many a parent, when it is ſhown, that to *his* neglect is mainly to be attributed the ruin of his offspring. By maſters much might be done, both to mitigate the aſperities of ſervitude, and to form the minds of their domeſtics for the eternal inheritance they anticipate themſelves. In the world to which we are haſting, all but moral diſtinctions will vaniſh; every individual, of every rank, will be excluſively regarded in relation to his ſpiritual fitneſs for heaven; it is our buſineſs *now* habitually to realize the truth,—to contemplate each other as poſſeſſing the ſame capacity in relation to God, and as travelling together towards that ſtate, where every difference

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in the preſent condition of our being will be forgotten, from the abſorbing importance of this. Theſe ſalutary recollections, without diminiſhing the rational regard which is due to the preſent conſtitution of ſociety, will tend both to inſpire reſpect for inferiors and dependants, and to prompt exertions for their ſpiritual benefit. The Scriptures contain much to recommend and enforce the duty. St. Paul's letter to Philemon reſpecting a ſlave whom he had converted, ſhows how condeſcending and comprehenſive was the benevolence of the Apoſtle, and is ſufficient to give ſublimity and grandeur to every act that ſeeks the ſalvation even of the loweſt of the ſpecies. It is forcibly intimated by the ſame Apoſtle, in his admonitions to ſervants, that "they may *adorn the doctrine* of God their Saviour," as if, by ſo ſplendid an expreſſion, he deſigned to impreſs both themſelves and their maſters with a becoming reſpect for their moral nature. What a beautiful remark that is in the Goſpels, "a centurion's ſervant *who was very dear unto him!*" There is ſomething uncommonly touching in this diſplay of affection and tenderneſs towards a domeſtic. "Brethren, think on theſe things." Imitate the conduct of Abraham as a father and a maſter; "as you have opportunity, do good unto all, but eſpecially to ſuch as are of *your own* houſehold." With reſpect to ſervants, if the obligation to care for their religious character cannot be felt ſimply as duty, ſolicitude for your children ſhould inſpire and promote it, as, upon children, they frequently exert a great and laſting, and, too often, a pernicious influence. On the whole, it becomes you "to walk before your house with a perfect heart;" that is, with a ſincere and univerſal attention to relative duties; maintaining domeſtic devotion, enforcing catechetical exerciſes, and diſplaying the attractive example of a uniform, conſiſtent, and holy life.

5. Meekneſs and moderation, friendſhip and magnanimity, are all conſpicuous in the conduct of Abraham towards Lot. The very eſſence of the Chriſtian ſpirit was diſplayed by him

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when it was found desirable to part from each other. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee,—for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or—if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." As the elder person and uncle of Lot, Abraham might have demanded priority of choice, but he readily waived every such claim, only solicitous to preserve peace and accommodate his kinsman. They did separate; and afterwards, when Lot was seized by invaders, and taken away with all his possessions, the patriarch armed his servants, pursued and conquered the enemy; engaged in scenes very repugnant, we may suppose, to his disposition and feeling, but necessary to be braved for the sake of one whom he loved as a brother. In contrast with the character of Lot, that of Abraham appears to immense advantage. Lot was unquestionably a good man, from the manner in which he is spoken of, and the epithet with which he is distinguished, by an Apostle; but he was very imperfect and very inconsistent. His choice of situation was probably too much influenced by mere temporal considerations; his connection with the people of the plain was far too close and intimate; he dwelt *in* the city; he suffered some of his daughters to marry idolaters, and was thus, it seems, the means of their destruction; he lost all the possessions for the sake of which he had probably both endangered and injured his virtue; and he was actually so blind and infatuated, as to yield a reluctant obedience to commands which contemplated his own safety. Such is the deadening influence of indulged sin, and such the variety of evils that may flow from one corrupt calculation and choice!

6. We might notice many other points in the character of Abraham, such as his hospitality; for, being "not unmindful to entertain strangers," he at one time "entertained angels unawares:" we might notice, too, his independence of mind, indicated by his dignified refusal of the spoil offered him by the king of Sodom; and, in connection with all this, we might illustrate

illuſtrate his exquiſite ſenſibility, ſeen in the tenderneſs of his ſorrow for Iſhmael, and in the tears which he ſhed over the aſhes of Sarah. But, we omit theſe, to cloſe this brief and imperfect portraiture of his excellence, by adverting to his religious philanthropy, as witneſſed by his perſevering interceſſion for Sodom. The annunciation of the judgment ſuſpended over ſo many ſouls, ſeems to have ſtrongly excited his ſolicitude, and to have prompted him to ſeek their deliverance by the only means he could employ; by prayer,—prayer to that Being with whom it lay to pardon or to puniſh. Abraham knew the efficacy of prayer; he had often felt and ſeen the proof of its actually poſſeſſing power with God; and he attempted to avert by it the terrible cataſtrophe, that ſeemed ready to deſcend on the devoted people. With what awe and humility the patriarch approaches God! He regards himſelf as but duſt and aſhes, and deprecates the Divine anger, as if it were likely to be rouſed by his preſumption. But with what benevolent pertinacity, if we may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, he perſeveres in preferring his requeſt! How he purſues his argument, from one degree to another, anxious to approach the very loweſt amount to which the number might be reduced! And the nature of the plea he urges is worthy of ſerious regard. It is not founded on the claim either of the wicked or the miſerable; he ſeems to acknowledge the righteous expoſure of the impenitent to puniſhment, but he prays that, for the ſake of others, *they* might be ſaved. It is the argument, in fact, employed now by the Interceſſor of the church; he pleads for the ſinner, not ſimply as ſuch, but becauſe he, the Juſt One, has fulfilled the law, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs. The patriarch did not prevail. The plea which he preſſed would have been admitted if it could have been found; but it was not. The evening cloſed upon him after this ſolemn ſeaſon of communion with God. He departed to his place. Early, however, the next morning he returned to the ſpot, as if anxious to aſcertain the effect of his appeal. He looked towards all the land of the

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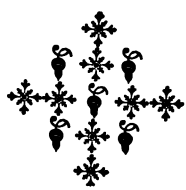
plain, and the very firſt glance conveyed the terrible intelligence. The vials of wrath had deſcended, and now "the ſmoke of the country went up as the ſmoke of a furnace."

What a view, my brethren, both the interceſſion and the argument of Abraham give us of the value of good men! Jehovah would have ſaved the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with all their immenſe population, for the ſake of ten righteous perſons, had that number been there. Indeed, it is very remarkable, that even thoſe who *were* ſaved, are repreſented as owing their eſcape to God's conſideration of another's worth. "When the Lord deſtroyed the cities of the plain," it is ſaid, "he remembered Abraham, and ſent Lot out of the midſt of the overthrow;" as if, you obſerve, Lot's connection with Abraham occaſioned the mercy he received. There is much meaning in this paſſage, both in relation to the preſent ſubject, and as illuſtrating how God *may* act in the general diſcharge of his moral government.

Learn, then, brethren, that, by poſſeſſing the faith of Abraham, by imitating his devotion, by being able to preſent that effectual fervent prayer which avails much, the meaneſt and moſt obſcure amongſt you may exert a poſitive influence on the happineſs of the world. You cannot enlighten ſociety by literary productions or ſcientific diſcoveries; you cannot confer ſuch benefits upon men as would reſult from improvements in commerce or legiſlation, but you can be holy,—and you can pray; you can thus adorn the age, and you can ſerve it; to you it may be indebted for bleſſings infinitely more valuable, than any which merely blend with its wealth or its literature. You may arreſt the progreſs of guilt; you may leſſen the aggravations of crime; you may cloſe ſome of the ſources of corruption. If wickedneſs increaſe, you may delay its puniſhment; if that puniſhment *muſt* come,—you have done your part; your efforts will be judged by their principle, not by their ſucceſs: you will be acknowledged, in the end, in your real character—the lovers of your country and the benefactors of the world,

to

to whom both were indebted for ſome of their beſt and brighteſt diſtinctions. "Ye are the ſalt of the earth." By your prayers, and for your ſake, it is preſerved. It is becauſe God has a church in the world, that the world itſelf is continued. Had he no object of delight and complacency like this, he would immediately blot it from its place in the univerſe. "Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation, but ſin is a reproach to any people." Upon this principle it will be found hereafter, that thouſands of the obſcureſt members of a community, were the trueſt and pureſt patriots, while many who were lauded as the bulwarks of its defence, were far more deſtructive to its proſperity and intereſts, than the arms or the incurſions of the moſt formidable foe.



Diſcourſe xii.

Juſtification.

HEB. xi. 8—19.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed. Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, ſo many as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea ſhore innumerable. Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity

to have returned. But now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

THE importance uniformly attached in Scripture to the name of Abraham, furniſhed us with a reaſon for entering, in our laſt diſcourſe, into a more minute examination of his general character than had hitherto been attempted; the ſame reaſon will account for our propoſing to wind up the whole of our obſervations reſpecting him, by a few brief remarks on the great doctrine, which his hiſtory is ſo frequently employed to illuſtrate. Paul, more than once, refers to ſome analogy between the caſe of the patriarch and that of every ſinful man who is juſtified by faith. In the particular exerciſe of mind and feeling, which Jehovah demanded of Abraham; in the perſonal bleſſing with which it was ſucceeded; and in the practical manifeſtations to which it led; we are ſaid to have a picture of what God requires of men under the Goſpel; of the way in which he will abſolve them from all iniquity; and of the proofs which they are to afford of the moral power of the proceſs by which the Divine mercy accompliſhes their ſalvation. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. Now, it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for ours alſo, to whom it will be imputed if we believe on him who raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead." "Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? and the Scripture was fulfilled

fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs."

The manner in which I conceive the propoſed obſervations may be made the moſt intelligible to a general auditory, and which, therefore, I ſhall forthwith adopt, will be, *firſt*, to exhibit what juſtification is, and how it may be obtained among men, together with a deſcription of the feelings occaſioned by the different kinds of it, and the natural effects of theſe on ſubſequent conduct: *next*, to ſhow how the mode and the reſults of a ſinner's juſtification with God, tally with theſe; *and then*, to endeavour to detect the point of coincidence, between this New Teſtament view of the matter, and that involved in the account of the "father of the faithful." Permit me to premiſe, that you are not to draw your concluſions from any one part of our illuſtration excluſively; you are to notice, as we advance, the ſeparate and ſpecific importance of each particular; to obſerve, alſo, its relative bearing upon the reſt; and then, in the end, to mark the general reſult to which we ſhall be led; towards which reſult, each conſideration will contribute ſomething, and which, therefore, will require, for its juſt apprehenſion, a regard to all the conſiderations in their combined character.

I.

JUSTIFICATION is a term taken from judicial proceedings. It ſuppoſes an examination into conduct by comparing it with the requirements of ſome law. It is of two kinds, proper and improper, or primary and ſecondary. The firſt is, when the examination terminates in *favour* of the individual. He is proved and pronounced to *be*, literally and in fact, all that the law requires. This is juſtification-proper. The ſecond ſenſe of the term refers to the delivery from puniſhment of a convicted offender. In this caſe the examination

nation terminates *againſt* the individual. He is proved and pronounced *not* to be what the law requires. A pardon, however, being granted, deſtroys the connection between his conduct and its conſequences. This is juſtification-improper, or ſecondary.

In both theſe caſes the *fact* of juſtification would be the ſame, but the *feeling* of the ſuppoſed individuals would be very different. In juſtification-proper, the character of the man whoſe conduct is ſubmitted to a compariſon with the law, preſents to the eye of the examiner a perfect counterpart of the law itſelf. Hence, the law, ſeeing this reflection of itſelf in the individual, pronounces that it has nothing againſt him, either as to accuſation or penalty. He is declared free both from ſin and guilt—that is, both from the actual violation of the law, which is ſin; and from the relation to the law of one who has violated it, which is, expoſure to puniſhment, or guilt.* The law looks upon him complacently,—alleges

* This term has two ſenſes. It is ſometimes employed to expreſs perſonal culpability—the *character* of one who has *committed* offence. At others, it is employed to expreſs anſwerableneſs to law, or expoſure to puniſhment—the *condition* of one who is *convicted* of offence. The firſt may be termed its moral, the ſecond its legal ſignification. An offender is guilty in the firſt ſenſe before trial, and would continue ſo after it, were he, for want of evidence legally to convict him, to be acquitted. In the ſecond ſenſe he is not guilty till after trial—that is, after being proved to be culpable by a legal proceſs. Hence, it is eaſy to perceive how, in two different ways, a perſon may be both innocent and guilty at the ſame time. He who *is* morally guilty, but who cannot be proved ſo, is not legally guilty; he who is *not* morally guilty, but who *appears* to be proved ſo, *is* legally guilty. The diſtinction is important, but this is not the place to purſue its illuſtration. When I wrote the definition in the text, I intended, for the ſake of preciſion, to confine my uſe of the term to the legal ſenſe; I have not done it; in fact, I found the attempt inconvenient in a popular diſcourſe, and therefore I add this note to apprize the reader of the circumſtance, and to explain the other ſenſe of the term, which, though not adverted to or included in the uſe of it in the above paſſage, will be found to attach to it in ſome ſubſequent paſſages.

nothing,

nothing, threatens nothing; pronounces that it actually has no ground of complaint, and therefore, no reaſon for puniſhment. But, juſtification-improper amounts to virtually the ſame thing. In this caſe, the character of the individual does *not* preſent to the eye of the examiner a counterpart of the law; the law, therefore, *not* ſeeing in him this reflection of itſelf, pronounces that it *has* ſomething againſt him, both as to accuſation and penalty; he is convicted of ſin, or actual violation of the law, and hence, by natural conſequence, he is involved in guilt, or, in other words, he ſuſtains the relation to the law of one who has broken the law,—that is, expoſure to puniſhment. Pardon, however, for the offence being equitably obtained, expoſure to puniſhment ceaſes of courſe. The law, as it were, looks upon the man and finds all ground of complaint fled, and therefore all reaſon for puniſhment deſtroyed. This ſecond individual is thus virtually placed in the condition, and clothed with the character of the firſt. He is looked upon, *as if he were*, literally and in fact, what the law requires,—what the other man is, and what he is not. He is *looked upon* as if he were, and, conſequently, he is *treated* as if he were. Hence, ſo far as the ſimple *reſult* of the examination and judgment reſpecting the two individuals is conſidered, it appears to be exactly the ſame thing. That which is denominated pardon, when contemplated in its relation to the act of ſin and the executive power,—is juſtification, when contemplated in relation to the deſert of ſin and the preſcribing law.

Though the fact of juſtification, or the reſult of the inſtituted inquiry, be thus in theſe two caſes virtually the ſame thing, it is to be further obſerved, that the feeling of the two individuals is very different. You will ſee this the more ſtrongly if you ſuppoſe, that, previous to the examination, a direct and poſitive accuſation is made againſt both. When the firſt man is brought up for trial, his calm, erect, dignified deportment evinces that he has no fear for the reſult. He denies the charge againſt

him

him with firmneſs; he liſtens to his accuſers without emotion; he oppoſes their evidence with counter and convincing teſtimonies of innocence; all is clear, and full, and demonſtrative; the judge is ſatisfied of his perfect conformity to the law—*that* is proved, inſtead of its violation; he is declared legally and literally juſt; he has juſtified himſelf; and he moves from the bar, to which he ſhould never have been brought, with the high and majeſtic air of a man injured by ſuſpicion, his pulſe beating with the ſtrong and ſtirring emotions of conſcious and inſulted virtue.—When the ſecond man is brought up for trial, his very countenance and manner convict him. If he deny the charge, it will be either with a boldneſs, itſelf the conſequence of guilt; or with faltering and tremulous accents, indicating that he knows denial to be uſeleſs. Every accuſation is ſubſtantiated; the evidence againſt him is clear, and full, and demonſtrative; he has nothing to reply; he ſtands a proved and convicted offender; the law has been violated, and the penalty incurred;—by pardon, however, the offence is virtually, and the liability to puniſhment actually, deſtroyed; he has not juſtified himſelf; he cannot be declared legally and literally juſt,—but he can be treated as if he were: the charge againſt him can be conſidered either as if it had not been made, or had not been ſubſtantiated; the law, therefore, ſees no reaſon to cenſure, and ſays nothing to terrify; he may depart; he may move from the bar, where juſtice could have condemned, but where mercy has abſolved, him; he has liberty and life ſecured; but they are given to him as a boon, they are not rendered to him as a right: he may retire, indeed, and with nothing to make him afraid; but, retiring under ſuch circumſtances, he cannot, and dare not exhibit any thing like the dignified deportment of the innocent accuſed; however he may feel joy and lightneſs of heart, it will be connected with ſuch a feeling of conſcious criminality, and ſuch a ſenſe of perſonal demerit, as to repreſs every tendency to pride, and to cruſh and annihilate every emotion like thoſe which were manifeſted

manifeſted by the man, who walked forth with the character of eſtabliſhed and vindicated virtue.

2.

SUCH are the two modes of juſtification in a court of law, and ſuch the different feelings with which they are reſpectively attended. In further purſuing the ſubject, we muſt limit our remarks to one, and that the latter, of the above juſtifications. It is to be obſerved, then, that not only are there theſe two kinds of juſtification itſelf, but there are two ways in which the laſt kind of it may be obtained. This kind conſiſts, as we have ſeen, in pardon; and we mean to ſay, that there are two principles, clearly diſtinguiſhable, upon which pardon may be diſpenſed. You are of courſe keeping in mind that we have now altogether left the firſt individual, who could juſtify himſelf, and are about to confine our obſervations to the caſe of the ſecond; to him, who, upon being examined according to a certain law, is pronounced to be an offender; ſtands expoſed and detected as ſuch,—liable to whatever penalty is attached to diſobedience. For this man to obtain juſtification-proper, is utterly out of the queſtion. A pardon, and nothing but a pardon, can poſſibly ſave him. This he may obtain in two ways; or, in other words, it may be granted or diſpenſed, upon the one or the other of two grounds. Theſe grounds we ſhall proceed to ſpecify.

In the firſt place, the ground or conſideration which ſhall weigh with the government,—with thoſe who, inveſted with the ſupreme executive power of the ſtate, are ſuppoſed to poſſeſs, to a certain extent, the prerogative of mercy;—the ground or conſideration which ſhall weigh with them, and ſhall lead to the exerciſe of the prerogative in this particular caſe, might be ſomething ariſing directly and immediately from the priſoner himſelf. It might be his previously good character;

or it might be the apparent reality of his penitence; his promiſes of amendment; and his earneſt ſupplications for the exerciſe of the prerogative. If the offence were comparatively trivial, or if there were any doubt of the perfect propriety of the law itſelf, theſe conſiderations might prevail; the prince or the parliament, or whoever reigned in the ſtate as ſupreme, might, in ſuch a caſe, be induced to grant a pardon, and to confer upon the man juſtification by favour. This, as we have already ſhown, is what pardon amounts to. It would virtually annihilate the offence of the individual; it would actually deliver him from the penalty attached to it; he could never be arraigned upon the ſame charge again: in ſhort, to the eye of the government, he would appear *as if* he had never committed the offence at all.

It is thus that, upon ſome ground ariſing directly from the man himſelf, pardon may be diſpenſed, or, in other words, juſtification-improper or ſecondary obtained. But, it is next to be obſerved, that the caſe may prove entirely deſtitute of this kind of appeal to the prerogative,—this perſonal ground for its equitable exerciſe. The offence may be ſuch, as to admit of no plea, either from previous or ſubſequent conduct. The law may be juſt and good. And here it is neceſſary to remark, more diſtinctly than we have yet done, that, in well-regulated governments, it is *this* that reigns. The individual denominated the ſovereign is the repreſentative, ſo to ſpeak, of the majeſty of the law; of the great principles of truth and rectitude ſuppoſed to pervade all its regulations. He is bound to act, therefore, *according to law*. His perſonal and official character are to be carefully diſtinguiſhed. In the one he has certain feelings; in the other he has certain functions and duties. The impulſes of the firſt are not to interfere with the diſcharge of the ſecond, except ſo far, and in ſuch a manner, as, on ſome peculiar occaſions, may be obviouſly conſiſtent with, and may actually maintain, the equity and honour of the law itſelf. All this is fully underſtood by the common ſenſe of mankind,

mankind, in relation to well-regulated governments, and is known to apply, according to their form, either to the individual or individuals in whom is inveſted the ſupreme executive power of the ſtate. Our reaſonings refer not to what may take place under a deſpot,—under one whoſe mere will is law; who acknowledges no principle whatever, as a rule or a reſtraint; who can make laws or ſuſpend them, according to his pleaſure; who can either pardon or puniſh, as ſuits his perſonal feelings—his vindictiveneſs or his caprice. It is not to ſuch a ſovereign, nor ſuch a government, that our illuſtrations apply; but to one in which laws, ſuppoſed to be equitable, are alſo ſuppoſed to be equitably diſpenſed. In this caſe, the individual, or individuals, who repreſent the ſovereignty of the law, act according to their official, not their perſonal character: they are bound to regard what is ſuggeſted by rectitude, as well as what is ſuggeſted by compaſſion. When a perſon, therefore, ſtands before them, circumſtanced like the man whom we have juſt deſcribed, whatever may be the depth of his penitence and the earneſtneſs of his appeal, and whatever may be the throbbings of ſenſibility in themſelves,—yet, remembering what they owe to the law which they repreſent, to their own conſiſtency in the view of their ſubjects, and even, it might be added, to thoſe ſubjects themſelves,—remembering all this, it might be, that, with all their perſonal deſire, as men, to exerciſe mercy, they might feel it to be utterly incompatible with their imperative obligations and duties as governors; and they might be poſitively compelled to deliver the priſoner to death, at the very moment when their hearts were yearning to ſave him.

Let us ſuppoſe, however, that the deliberations of government upon the caſe of a convicted offender, circumſtanced as we have juſt deſcribed, inſtead of terminating in the command to inflict the penalty of the law, ſhould terminate in its ſuſpenſion, and in the arrangement of ſome extraordinary meaſure, which, being appealed to by the guilty man, ſhould be admitted as a valid ground for the exerciſe of the prerogative.

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We *can* ſuppoſe this; and it might occur. Such a courſe, though confeſſedly ſingular, might certainly be adopted. If adopted, then, the ground or reaſon, on account of which pardon was diſpenſed, would be ſomething that did *not* riſe directly and immediately from the offender himſelf. This, whatever it might be, being employed or pleaded by the priſoner, in the preciſe manner appointed by the government, would weigh with thoſe who exerciſed the ſupreme executive power of the ſtate, juſt as the previous virtue, &c., of the firſt man weighed in *his* caſe;—the ſupplicated pardon would be granted, and juſtification-ſecondary conſequently conferred. The ſame reſults would follow as before. The man's offence would virtually be annihilated; he would actually be delivered from the penalty attached to it; by the government he would henceforth be viewed *as if* he had never committed the offence at all. From all this, it appears, that, in conſequence of ſome extraordinary appointment altogether independent of the perſon himſelf,—as well as in conſequence of ſome conſiderations ariſing directly and immediately from him,—a man may obtain the juſtification of favour, when he cannot demand the juſtification of right. In both caſes the kind of juſtification is the ſame, but the reaſon for granting it is very different.

Here we might make a remark ſimilar to what was ſuggeſted by our firſt illuſtration. We then obſerved, in the caſe of the two individuals who obtained, reſpectively, primary and ſecondary juſtification, that, though the fact of juſtification would be the ſame in reſpect to both, yet the feelings of the parties would be very different; and this we ſhowed neceſſarily to ariſe from the different nature of the juſtification itſelf. In the preſent caſe, however, not only is the fact of juſtification the ſame in both individuals, but alſo the nature of it; there is here, then, a much greater agreement than before; yet, even here, alſo, is there a difference of feeling; and this, it will be ſeen, as neceſſarily ariſes from the different ground on which the one and the ſame juſtification is conferred. Both of the men

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laſt deſcribed are offenders: both receive, therefore, juſtification by pardon; he, however, who receives it in conſideration of ſomething in himſelf,—his preſent penitence or previous virtue,—has obviouſly ſome reaſon for perſonal ſatisfaction to mingle with his ſenſe of perſonal demerit. But the other man, for whom nothing could be urged by way of perſonal appeal to the prerogative, and who, therefore, was pardoned ſolely in conſideration of ſomething out of himſelf,—ſomething provided by unmerited favour, and pleaded with humble dependence,—this man has obviouſly but one feeling, that of conſcious unworthineſs, unqualified by the leaſt portion of that of complacency.

3.

SO far, we ſeem very diſtinctly to have aſcertained that there are two kinds of juſtification; one, in which a man is treated as what he is; another, in which he is treated as what he is not. By leaving the conſideration of the firſt of theſe, and limiting our attention to the ſecond, we have farther aſcertained that there are two grounds on which this laſt kind of juſtification may be conferred; one, ariſing directly from the individual himſelf; another, out of himſelf, ariſing from foreign interference in his favour. Now, in proceeding with the ſubject, we ſhall leave the firſt of theſe grounds of juſtification, juſt as we formerly left the firſt kind of juſtification itſelf, and, limiting our attention to the ſecond, attempt a remark or two, reſpecting that, ſtill more ſpecific and particular.

This ground of juſtification is ſuppoſed to be ſomething graciouſly provided by government itſelf, in order to harmonize the perſonal and official character of the governors. Thoſe who repreſent and execute the law have, properly ſpeaking, in their official character, no feeling; though, in their perſonal character, they may be remarkable for poſſeſſing it. In the

one,

one, too, their courſe is imperatively preſcribed to them, and, in purſuing it, they would act in perfect conſiſtency with rectitude; yet, in the other, they can eaſily be ſuppoſed, on ſome peculiar occaſion, to wiſh, if it were poſſible, to depart from the exact letter of the law, and yet to maintain and illuſtrate its ſpirit; and thus, by the inſtitution of ſome extraordinary meaſure, to be able to extend mercy to an offender, without appearing to ſanction or palliate the offence. All this, I feel quite certain, is perfectly conceivable; and the principle it involves has, I think, been illuſtrated by facts. Without, however, entering at preſent into the ſeparate queſtion of the propriety of ſuch an attempt at compromiſe on the part of a government, let us ſuppoſe the attempt made, and the meaſure determined, and a document actually handed to the offender ſtating to him the ground on which pardon may be obtained, or, if you prefer the phraſeology, the terms and conditions of his juſtification. Suppoſe all this, and then attend to the force of the two following obſervations reſpecting it.

In the firſt place. It ſeems obvious, that the firſt inquiry with the man, circumſtanced as we deſcribe, is, not the philoſophy of the meaſure, but the fact of it. It is for him to aſcertain *what* the government has ſelected for the accompliſhment of the propoſed purpoſe, and not *why* they have ſelected it. Thoſe, inveſted with the ſovereign power, are to be ſuppoſed beſt acquainted with what the emergency demands; to know beſt what is moſt conſiſtent with the principles, and moſt conducive to the ends, of government, and to have a right, therefore, to ſelect any means whatever which a regard to theſe ſuggeſts, and which *they* ſee it becoming to appoint; and all that the criminal has to do, is, to be ſatisfied, by the proper authorities, that ſuch or ſuch a means *is* appointed, and then to acquieſce in it, with a perfect conviction of its wiſdom, and to truſt it, with a perfect confidence of its efficiency. It appears unneceſſary for the man fully to underſtand all the reaſons of ſtate that led to the appointment. The benefit to be derived

derived from an appeal to the prerogative does not depend upon this. There may be reaſons which he cannot comprehend; reaſons ariſing from the nature of the government, or the nature of the law, or the condition of other ſubjects of the empire, all which it may be impoſſible for him to know or to appreciate until he actually mingles among theſe other ſubjects themſelves, and learns more, both of the law and of the government, than he has time, or power, or opportunity to do while a priſoner. It would ſeem, therefore, that without perplexing himſelf about the *rationale* of the meaſure propoſed to him, he ſhould have recourſe to it juſt as it is; recourſe to it as a fact, which, as ſuch, it is poſſible to confide in, though as an appointment it may be impoſſible to explain it. The *why* of the thing may be a myſtery, but the *what* of it is no myſtery. This he can underſtand as a truth; he can plead it as a truth; upon the authority of the official document, he can feel confident that the plea will prevail with thoſe to whom it is addreſſed, becauſe *they*, he knows, perfectly underſtand it; and thus he may derive the advantage he ſeeks, though he ſees not preciſely how it is obtained; juſt as, relying on the ſkill of a phyſician, he can uſe a medicine preſcribed by him, and derive from it every advantage, though he knows nothing of its ſeparate ingredients, the proportions in which they are combined, nor the mode in which the whole is intended to act upon the different parts of the animal economy.

But, in the ſecond place, it is to be obſerved, that this laſt analogy is rather deceptive. There *is* a difference between natural and moral medicine. The one operates by mechanical force; the other by rational perſuaſion. There is to be expected, therefore, in anything intended to influence and benefit the mind, a real adaptation to its functions and nature. Hence, in the caſe ſuppoſed, though the efficacy of any plea might, in relation to the perſon benefited, be reſolved, as above, into the appointment of the ſupreme power, and ſhown to depend more upon the ſimple confidence of the priſoner in the

the wiſdom and faithfulneſs of government, than upon his perſonal diſcernment of the reaſon of its acts; yet, it ſeems equally obvious, that, under an intelligent government, this efficiency would, in relation to *it*, ultimately ſpring from ſome inherent propriety in the plea itſelf. In the ſelection of the ſuppoſed meaſure, it is evident *that* would be preferred by which the ends ſought might be moſt eminently accompliſhed. Wiſe men would not appoint anything merely from caprice,—merely to ſhow their ſupremacy and independence. In the caſe we are imagining, the perſons have an intelligent aim and purpoſe: they are ſuppoſed, from their perſonal benevolence, to be anxious to depart, in their official capacity, from the exact letter of the law, and yet to maintain and illuſtrate its ſpirit: and thus, by the inſtitution of ſome extraordinary meaſure, to be able to extend mercy to an offender without appearing to ſanction or palliate the offence. From this it is evident that the meaſure, whatever it be, cannot be one merely arbitrary; one, deriving its importance and power, altogether from the fact of its appointment. Surely, ſomething would be preferred that ſhould have in itſelf a rational propriety; ſomething that ſhould be ſeen to be capable of influencing the operations of government; ſomething that might act, by way of natural conſequence, upon the mind of the priſoner, impreſſing him with the flagrancy of his offence, the majeſty of the law, the regard to rectitude, as well as to compaſſion, of thoſe inveſted with the ſupreme authority. It is reaſonable, I ſay, to ſuppoſe, that ſomething poſſeſſing ſuch properties would be employed; and that they would be perceived to belong to it by the perſons to whom it was propoſed; and, then, ſo far as theſe were underſtood, the reaſons for the choice of the appointment would be underſtood. It would ſtill be true, however, as before aſſerted, that the efficiency of the plea would not depend upon the apprehenſion by the priſoner of theſe reaſons. That efficiency would, in reſpect to the government, ariſe from the inherent propriety of the appointment

ment itſelf; and, in reſpect to the man, from his perſonal truſt in it, in conſequence of his believing the aſſurances of government. But, the man's perceiving the nature, and underſtanding the reaſons of the appointment, would, in the firſt place, be a rational inducement to the exerciſe of truſt; and, in the ſecond place, it would thus come to paſs, that, the very exerciſe of mind neceſſary to pardon would be favourable to virtue, as the properties perceived in the ground of that pardon, would be ſeen to conſtitute the ſtrongeſt motives to ſubſequent obedience.

4.

WE now terminate this train of conſecutive illuſtrations by one concluding remark,—a remark to which we ſeem to be brought as to the natural winding up of the whole ſubject. Suppoſe all that we have imagined as actually taking place; ſuppoſe that the caſe of an offender excited (from whatever cauſe) the intereſt deſcribed, and led to the benevolent proviſion of ſome extrinſic ground of appeal, in conſideration of which, mercy might be diſpenſed; ſuppoſe that the knowledge of this was conveyed to him, by ſome official and intelligible document, ſtating the fact, explaining the nature of the profeſſed ground of dependence, and pledging the government to regard an appeal founded upon it. Suppoſe this;—and then ſuppoſe farther, that, believing the document to be authentic, and the facts and promiſes contained in it to be true, the perſon acted upon its ſuggeſtions, ſought and ſecured the boon; in this caſe, a caſe altogether ſecular, I ſhould ſay that the man *was juſtified by faith*; in other words, that he obtained pardon by means of his belief of the teſtimony of government.—He had been proved and pronounced a flagrant offender; by this he was neceſſarily expoſed to puniſhment; it was utterly impoſſible for him to be juſtified by law;

it was equally impoſſible for him to be juſtified by favour, merely in conſequence of an appeal to the prerogative, or in conſideration of his poſſeſſing any balancing attributes of virtue; yet, through his confidence in a certain communication tendered him by government, the otherwiſe impoſſible object is accompliſhed. He truſts the promiſe; he urges the plea; he directs, ſo to ſpeak, the eye of the executive from the contemplation of himſelf, to the contemplation of the ground, upon which it is aſſerted, and upon which he feels, a full pardon may be equitably diſpenſed. The conſideration prevails; the plea is admitted; the pardon is given; by this he is virtually placed in the condition, and clothed with the character, of one who has vindicated and eſtabliſhed his perſonal virtue; he is regarded and treated *as if he were* juſt; his offence becomes, as to its direct conſequences, *as if* it had never been; he is proclaimed free; he is ſhielded from puniſhment; he is *pardoned*—he is *juſtified*—he is juſtified *by faith*.

Diſcourſe xiii.

Juſtification.

HEB. xi. 8—19.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed. Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, ſo many as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea ſhore innumerable. Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a

country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

IN our diſcourſe laſt Sabbath, it was propoſed to wind up the whole of our obſervations reſpecting Abraham, by a few brief remarks on the great doctrine, which his hiſtory is ſo frequently employed to illuſtrate. The order in which theſe remarks were to be ſubmitted to you, was thus ſtated. We ſhall attempt,—"*firſt*, to exhibit what juſtification is, and how it may be obtained among men, together with a deſcription of the feelings occaſioned by the different kinds of it, and the natural effects of theſe on ſubſequent conduct: *next*, to ſhow how the mode and the reſults of a ſinner's juſtification with God, tally with theſe: *and then*, to endeavour to detect the point of coincidence between this New Teſtament view of the matter, and that involved in the account of the 'father of the faithful.'"

The firſt part of this plan was alone entered upon laſt Lord's day; it will now be attempted to complete it by advancing to thoſe that remain. We proceed, therefore, without further remark, to the application of the principles, illuſtrated in our former diſcourſe, to the matter of man's juſtification with God. In doing this, we ſhall briefly refer to theſe principles in the order in which they were ſtated or eſtabliſhed, and endeavour to aſcertain in what way the Scriptures authorize their application to ourſelves.

1. You

I.

YOU were informed — that juſtification is a term taken from judicial proceedings; that it preſuppoſes an examination into conduct by comparing it with the requirements of ſome law; that it is of two kinds, proper and improper, or, in other words, that it may be obtained by right, or by favour: it was explained, that, by the firſt of theſe was intended, a perſon's being proved to be, literally and in fact, what the law requires; and, by the ſecond, the treatment of a perſon *as if he were*, though proved *not* to be, literally and in fact, what the law requires. It was further ſhown that, though juſtification in both ſenſes came virtually to the ſame thing, the feelings accompanying the one were very different from thoſe accompanying the other.

In proceeding to examine in what way theſe and other obſervations and principles formerly mentioned, are, according to Scripture, applicable to us, I take for granted two things, namely, the Divine exiſtence and the Divine government; that there is a God, and that there is a law according to which God conducts the affairs of the moral univerſe;—a law, to which all his intelligent creatures ought to conform, and by which, if he pleaſe, they can at any time be examined. Both theſe points might be ſupported by many arguments, but we aſſume them, becauſe we aſſume the truth of Revelation, and in this latter aſſumption the former appears to be contained.

We aſſume, then, the Divine exiſtence and the Divine government. Of this government we are ſubjects. As ſuch, we ought to be conformed to the Divine law. Our conduct may be examined by comparing it with the requirements of that law. Thoſe requirements may be reduced to the inculcation of one great general principle—"thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength; and thy neighbour as thyſelf." Now, the queſtion

is,

is, ſuppoſing ſuch examination and compariſon to be inſtituted reſpecting us, *what would be the reſult?* If it ſhould be proved that we are, literally and in fact, all that the law requires, we obtain, of courſe, juſtification-proper,—juſtification by right. If it ſhould be proved that we are *not*, literally and in fact, all that the law requires, then, it will be obvious, that we ſtand in need of juſtification by favour.

Now, we have nothing to do with *ſuppoſing* what would be the reſult of this inquiry. In this diſcourſe we ſuppoſe nothing. Our buſineſs is to receive teſtimony,—teſtimony aſſumed to be true. "What ſaith the Scripture?" What is the reſponſe of the infallible oracle to this *firſt* queſtion ſubmitted to its deciſion?—"The whole world lieth in wickedneſs." "All have gone out of the way." "There is not a juſt man that liveth and ſinneth not." "If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.—If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him (God) a liar, and his word is not in us." "All have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God." "As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one—that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight." It would be difficult to find language more direct or concluſive than this. If words have any meaning, we are here furniſhed with a full and unequivocal anſwer to our firſt inquiry. Here is an explicit and univerſal charge of ſinfulneſs againſt us. Here is alſo the diſtinct ſtatement of the conſequence, in reſpect to juſtification, which this neceſſarily involves, namely, that the firſt kind of it is, as to every one of us, utterly out of the queſtion; it is an impoſſibility; not a ſingle individual can be juſtified by right,—by being proved to be, literally and in fact, what the law requires; the contrary is ready to be eſtabliſhed againſt the whole world; if, therefore, that world, or any part of it, is juſtified at all, it muſt be by juſtification of favour.

From this it appears that the feelings of the man who triumphantly

triumphantly ſuſtains an examination into conduct, and who walks forth with the confidence of vindicated virtue, never can be ours. To make the analogy bear upon our ſpiritual relation to God, perhaps we might ſay, that, we are for ever ſhut out from a participation of the feelings of thoſe intelligences, who "kept their firſt eſtate;" who, ſuppoſing they were tried by any poſitive appointment, bore the trial, whatever it might be; who thus evinced their regard to the whole law, and, of courſe, diſplayed in moral character an entire conformity to all its requiſitions; who preſented, therefore, to the eye of God, on comparing their conduct with the requirements of the law, a perfect counterpart of the law itſelf; who were conſequently proved and pronounced to be, literally and in fact, all that it demanded; who thus obtained juſtification-proper; were declared free from ſin—free, alſo, of courſe, from liability to puniſhment —and hence entitled to whatever was attached to perſonal obedience, or ſucceſsful probation.—From all ſympathy with beings ſo circumſtanced, we, the above Scriptures aſſert, are completely and for ever excluded. *Such* juſtification, and ſuch feelings as flow from it, never can be ours.

2.

YOU were next informed, in the laſt diſcourſe, that, not only are there two kinds of juſtification, but two ways in which the laſt kind of it may be obtained. The firſt of theſe was deſcribed to be ſomething ariſing immediately and directly from the man himſelf; the ſecond, ſomething out of himſelf, ariſing from foreign interference in his favour. Let us examine upon which of theſe the word of God directs us to depend, applying, as we advance, the various principles and reaſonings, which, under the former illuſtration of each, were adverted to or purſued.

In the firſt place, juſtification-improper, or ſecondary, that is,

is, pardon, may be obtained or diſpenſed in conſideration of ſome ground or reaſon ariſing directly from the offender himſelf; from his previouſly good character, from his penitence, from his promiſe of amendment, or his humble and earneſt appeal to the prerogative. Such facts and circumſtances as theſe, may certainly prevail at times with a government to remit the penalty incurred by diſobedience, and, of courſe, to confer juſtification by favour. Eſpecially may this be expected in caſes where the offence is trivial, or where there may be a doubt of the perfect propriety of the law. Now, the queſtion is, may we apply *this* as the proper analogy to the caſe of man and his Maker? Are we authorized to expect pardon on any ſuch grounds and conſiderations?

A thouſand voices reply, "Certainly." "Why not?" "Surely, in examining and judging of character, it would be unfair to neglect the beſt and brighteſt parts of it, and inequitable not to balance the evil and the good?" "It never can be ſuppoſed that God will condemn a man, uniformly amiable and virtuous, for a few ſins; or that in any inſtance he will act without making proper allowance for human weakneſs?" "If we are ſorry for the paſt, and aſk to be forgiven, and reform and improve, what more can poſſibly be required?" "My ſon, or my ſervant, acknowledges his fault, and I forgive him,—am I better than God?" "It is monſtrous to think our imperfections can appear ſo aggravated and immenſe; or that any law which makes them appear ſo, ſhould be approved or executed by the bountiful Father of all mankind!"

Now, all this reaſoning might be met *by reaſoning*. It might be ſhown, that there is much to lead us to ſuſpect that *ſin* is by no means ſo trivial a matter as theſe ſpeakers repreſent; (that it *is* trivial, or comparatively ſo, is, you may obſerve, the aſſumption on which the whole of their obſervations proceed.) Then, ſuppoſing it to poſſeſs the character of a grave, or let us ſay, a capital, offence, it might be urged, that one ſuch offence is ſufficient, in human governments, to expoſe to puniſhment a perſon

perſon in every other reſpect virtuous; that repentance, entreaty, and ſo on, cannot, in ſuch caſes, be admitted; for, having no reflex operation on the paſt, and being incapable, therefore, of altering the fact of the offence, they are inſufficient to authorize a departure from the law. It might be ſaid, that a father or maſter may do what a judge or governor cannot; that even *they* do not always ſo eaſily paſs over diſobedience; and that to conceive of God *merely* as ſuſtaining to his creatures the parental relation, is a partial, and therefore an illogical and falſe, view of his character, of our relation to *Him*, and of his to us, and, if admitted as a principle in moral reaſoning, muſt lead to abſurd and pernicious concluſions. Then, again, it might further be ſaid, that there is this difference, unqueſtionably great, between law, human and divine, namely, that, while doubts may often be juſtly entertained of the propriety of the one, the perfect, eternal, immutable propriety of the other never can be doubted; that, therefore, any thing like arbitrary departure from it by Deity, is inconceivable, becauſe it would be wrong; that its ſanctions muſt, of courſe, be as proper as itſelf; and that it muſt be right for God to execute, whatever it is right for God to denounce. Beſides, it might be ſuggeſted, that the puniſhment of ſin is not, properly ſpeaking, *executed*; that is, that it requires no exertion of *power* on the part of God, but that it is rather to be regarded as the direct and neceſſary reſult of ſin itſelf upon intelligent and moral natures, which, probably, could not, as ſuch, have been conſtituted differently in relation to ſin; that, therefore, no puniſhment awaiting ſin can poſſibly be diſproportioned to the offence, for it is nothing elſe but juſt the unavoidable perpetuation, and the evolving, ſo to ſpeak, of the offence itſelf; hence, what is to be poſitively *done* on the part of God, what requires the exertion of *power*, in the caſe of offenders, is, not the infliction or the execution of puniſhment, but, it is the interrupting, by miracle, of the eſtabliſhed and neceſſary laws that govern the ſpiritual, intelligent, and moral univerſe; and then, as an

inference

inference from all this, it might be obſerved that it is at leaſt *doubtful* whether any thing ſuggeſted by the above ſpeakers, amounts to an adequate conſideration to induce God to work ſuch a miracle. It might ſtill further be urged, that the voice of humanity, the teſtimony of our own nature, intelligibly expreſſed in religious rites, is directly and univerſally oppoſed to the preceding aſſumptions; that the ſuperſtitions of all ages and countries, however different in ſome reſpects, always had one common character, in that they were adapted to guilt, not innocence; and included ſacrifices, ſufferings, and ſo on, as grounds of forgiveneſs, and conſiderations to propitiate,—juſt as if the heart, when not miſled by the underſtanding,—as if men, uncorrupted by reaſoning, unſophiſticated by philoſophy, had an inſtinctive conſciouſneſs that *ſomething elſe* was eſſential to pardon beſides the expreſſions of penitence or prayer.

I merely obſerve, that this, and much more than this, *might* be ſaid, by way of argumentatively meeting what was ſuppoſed to be argumentatively advanced. But the fact is, that reaſoning, argument, is, on either ſide, at preſent, altogether improper. We are not now reaſoning on general principles; we are not ſeeking by argument the eſtabliſhment or diſcovery of certain truths; we are receiving evidence, we are liſtening to teſtimony. We have to do, not with what we think, but with what we read; the queſtion is not what we fancy *we* can prove to be rational, but what we find *God* has pronounced to be right. However myſterious, therefore, it may ſeem, however irreconcilable to juſt reaſoning, for violations of Divine law to be pardoned on account of the offender's other virtues, or on account of his penitence, reformation, or entreaty; yet, if the Scriptures really aſſert that theſe, ſeparately or combined, conſtitute God's ſelected ground of juſtification by favour, then, let reaſon do homage to faith, and let us reverently admit the ſacred fact, however repugnant it may ſeem to our philoſophy.

Thus we are brought back to the inquiry, to which, indeed, we are rigidly bound down, "What ſaith the Scripture?"

"What

"What is the reſponſe of the infallible oracle to this *ſecond* queſtion ſubmitted to its deciſion?"

In aſcertaining the reply of the "faithful and true witneſs," it is important to obſerve, that *all* the declarations or evidence of that witneſs muſt be heard. The anſwer is not obtained by its being ſhown that ſuch and ſuch things (what have been mentioned for inſtance) are required, unleſs it alſo be ſhown that *nothing elſe* is required. We muſt hear the witneſs out, remembering that they only who, on any queſtion, poſſeſs the *whole* truth, poſſeſs *the* truth. The greater includes the leſs; the admiſſion, therefore, of the greater, is not the denial of the leſs, but the admiſſion *only* of the leſs *is* the denial of the greater. It is granted, a part of truth *is* truth, but, it may operate with the malignity of error it it be miſtaken for the whole; this miſtake is error, and the truth, whatever it be, aſſociated with ſuch miſtake, will operate, in the mind that admits it, according to this ſecondary conception; it will thus loſe its proper character, have its relation to the reſt of truth deſtroyed, and really become an error; for, it will be taken for what it is *not*, that is, it will be, virtually, a deluſion and a falſehood. Theſe poſitions are ſelf-evident. It is important to regard them in all inquiries, philoſophical, ſcientific, or ſacred. It is important to regard them now.

What, then, ſaith the Scripture? that is, ſeeing that man needs a pardon, and pardon may be diſpenſed on two grounds, the firſt of which is, ſomething ariſing directly and immediately from the offender himſelf, his virtue, penitence, reformation, and ſo on, what ſaith it as to theſe things? Does it ſay that theſe things are neceſſary? does it ſay that nothing elſe is neceſſary? or, which is the ſame thing, but leſs direct, is it ſimply *ſilent*, giving no intimation of, uttering no alluſion to, any other thing as eſſential to conſtitute the ground of forgiveneſs? The thouſand voices whoſe *reaſonings* we have already heard, would reply to theſe queſtions by thouſands of *quotations*, in which, not virtue, perhaps, but repentance, is required as preliminary

to pardon. "The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe." "O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great." "I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſion unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin." "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins." And ſo on.

Now, to all this what is to be objected? Nothing. We have no objection, we dare not object, to anything proceeding from the infallible oracle. This proceeds from it; it is therefore truth. The queſtion is, Is it the *whole* truth, or only a *part* of it? It will be quite concluſive, if it be the entire evidence; if the witneſs, whoſe teſtimony we are obtaining, has nothing farther to advance. But, if there *be* ſomething farther; if anything additional is ſtated; anything not of the nature of a mental feeling or moral act on the part of man, but ſomething effected independently of him, whatever it may be; this, and this alone, will contain or complete the reſponſe to the propoſed inquiry. Let the evidence proceed. "Without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion." "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt—cleanſeth us from all ſin." "Repent—and believe the Goſpel." Preaching "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace." "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us." "God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.—He hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him." Ye are "redeemed—with the precious blood of Chriſt, as a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot." "This is—my blood, ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world."

world." "He is the propitiation for our ſins." "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh." "As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh." "Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,—that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth." And ſo on.

Now, it is to be obſerved, that all this is as really a part of Scripture teſtimony as what was previouſly adduced. It is additional, not contradictory to the other. It is quoted, not to explain *what it is* on account of which man obtains pardon (we have not come to that yet), but merely to ſhow, that *ſomething elſe* is eſſential to the object, beſides what may exiſt in himſelf. It is utterly impoſſible that theſe paſſages could have been written by perſons who had no idea beyond certain feelings or acts on the part of man, and forgiveneſs on the part of God. Here are diſtinct and intelligible intimations of ſomething which man did not do,—ſomething out of himſelf, whatever it may prove to be, as neceſſary to his enjoying juſtification by favour. We conſider, therefore, this *ſecond* inquiry to be clearly and unequivocally anſwered. It is plain, that the firſt ground of pardon, like the firſt kind of juſtification, muſt be given up; the one is inſufficient, as the other is unattainable.

Nor is this all. The paſſages adduced will warrant a ſtill ſtronger mode of expreſſion than any yet employed. The *nature* of the inſufficiency which Scripture appears to attach to what we term the perſonal ground of ſecondary juſtification, is to be obſerved. It is inſufficiency, not of degree but of kind; not comparative, but abſolute. That is to ſay, the meaning of the oracle ſeems to be, not that thoſe perſonal acts and emotions, to which we have referred, and which it demands, are inſufficient to ſecure pardon in ſuch a ſenſe, that *with* the ſomething elſe to which it alludes,

they

they will, altogether, *be* ſufficient,—thus attributing to them a certain portion of direct and effective influence in ſecuring the boon; but, it ſeems to be, that the direct and effective influence belongs to that ſomething elſe, excluſively and alone; and that thoſe perſonal emotions and acts are demanded for ſome other purpoſe; that they have a propriety and a uſe diſtinct from what would be involved in their conſtituting a part of the conſideration on account of which pardon is conferred; for, if they did this, they would become entitled, that is, they would entitle man, to a part of the glory and luſtre of the achievement. You will ſee the truth and the force of theſe remarks, perhaps, by noticing what the language is, and what it is not, in which ſome of the moſt important ſtatements of Scripture, relating to the matter, are conveyed. It is true that repentance, and reformation, and earneſt ſupplications for mercy are required, and, without theſe, it is repreſented that the benefit of that ſomething on which pardon depends is certainly not obtained; but it is obvious that all theſe things are ſpoken of in a very different way, and are repreſented as very different in nature, from that ſomething itſelf; and it is intimated that they are regarded as poſſeſſing a very different ſort of worth, and are contemplated by God in a very different light from *it*. Aſſuming that faith, as the ſimple reception and correſponding impreſſion of the teſtimony of God, cannot poſſibly have in it anything of the nature of a meritorious work, then, it will be ſeen, that the obſervations now advanced are ſuſtained by ſuch paſſages as oppoſe faith to all works whatſoever; works, whether of ſimple obedience or penitential reformation. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace;"— "not of faith, *and* repentance, previous virtue, reformation, and so on,"—elſe the inference deduced would not have followed. We are "juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law," deeds produced either by ſpontaneous regard to it, or contrite return. "Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law

law of faith." This inference or aſſertion, again, could not be admitted but upon the principle we are advocating. "In Chriſt," not in him *and* in repentance, previous virtue, reformation, and ſo on,—"we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace." "Chriſt — is made unto us — redemption;" and that this intimates that every thing perſonally belonging to man, or directly ariſing from him, is excluded from contributing efficiently to the bleſſing, is evident, from its being immediately added, as a practical conſequence, "that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Now, theſe remarks, you perceive, tend to ſhow, how completely the analogy is ſuſtained between what was advanced in the former diſcourſe, and what the infallible oracle compels us to admit in this. Juſt as the man, who was cut off from all dependence, either in whole or in part, on the firſt ground of ſecondary juſtification, was entirely deprived of that mingling of ſelf-ſatisfaction with his conſciouſneſs of perſonal demerit, which the man, who *could* thus depend, might conſiſtently indulge;—ſo, we, it appears, are to conſider that, as nothing ariſing directly and immediately from ourſelves has the leaſt portion of influence in ſecuring our pardon, therefore, we, alſo, are deprived of the privilege of qualifying our ſenſe of unworthineſs, by any infuſion of perſonal complacency.

3.

SO far then, I really think we have aſcertained that the teſtimony of Scripture goes to deny to man, both the firſt *kind* of juſtification, and the firſt *ground* of the ſecond kind of it; conſequently, neither the entire, nor the mitigated feeling of boaſting ever can be his. Leaving, therefore, both theſe

theſe topics, let us advance to what is yet to be ſubmitted to the deciſion of "the faithful and true witneſs."

The ſubſtance of ſo much of the laſt diſcourſe as ſtill remains to be noticed and applied, may be thus ſtated. You were informed, that, in juſt and legitimate governments, the *Law* reigns; that, thoſe who repreſent and execute it, are required to act according to law; that, they may be conſidered as poſſeſſing both a perſonal and official character, in the one of which, they have certain feelings, and in the other, certain functions and duties; that it may happen, therefore, in caſes of flagrant offence, that, however perſonally they might compaſſionate the criminal, and deſire to ſave him, they may, officially, be utterly unable to do ſo, becauſe, ſuch a courſe, though agreeable to their feelings as men, would be inconſiſtent with their obligations and duties as governors; a caſe, however, was imagined, in which their deſire to do this was ſuppoſed to be ſo ſtrong, as to lead, firſt, to the ſuſpenſion of puniſhment, and, then, to the adoption of ſome extraordinary meaſure, which, being appealed to by the guilty, ſhould be admitted as a valid ground for the exerciſe of the prerogative. This was repreſented as the proviſion of ſomething out of a man's ſelf, as the ground of his juſtification; it was deſcribed as being intended to warrant a departure from the exact letter of the law, yet maintaining and illuſtrating its ſpirit; that thus the executive, or ſupreme preſiding power of the ſtate, might be able to extend mercy to an offender, without appearing to ſanction or palliate his offence; in other words, it is the opening of the way for the exerciſe of the prerogative, not merely *as* prerogative, that is, not merely as an act of perſonal pleaſure and irreſponſible will, but an act, which, judged of by the principle of law, ſhould be ſeen to be ſatisfactory to and confirmatory of that principle. Then, you were further informed, that, ſuppoſing ſuch a courſe as this adopted, and propoſed to be acted upon, with reſpect to an offender, two things were to be remarked; *firſt*, that, in ſuch a caſe, all the offender had to do was, to aſcertain *what* was appointed

appointed to meet the emergency, and not *why* that particular thing, whatever it might be, was ſpecifically ſelected; for, its efficacy, in relation to him, would, it was obſerved, reſt on his ſimple reception of and appeal to it as a fact: *ſecond*, that ſtill, as its efficacy, in relation to the government, muſt be ſuppoſed to reſult, not from its mere appointment, (for if ſo, it would reſolve itſelf, after all, into an act of mere will, and, in relation to the government, would be the ſame as if it had appointed nothing,)—as its efficacy, then, in this relation, muſt be ſuppoſed to reſult from ſome inherent power and propriety in the thing itſelf, it was obſerved, that it might be expected to be ſo far underſtood by thoſe to whom it was propoſed, as to permit them to ſee, to a certain extent, in what way it did harmonize the perſonal and official character of thoſe who ſuſtained and exerciſed the ſupreme authority; and thus, alſo, be adapted to operate, by way of natural conſequence, on the improvement of the priſoner, making the very exerciſe of mind neceſſary to pardon favourable to virtue, and conſtituting in itſelf the ſtrongeſt motive to ſubſequent obedience. It was then added, by way of winding up the whole argument, that, ſuppoſing this to be done by a government, and intelligence of it to be authoritatively communicated to a guilty perſon, and he, in conſequence, to appeal to and plead it, then, it was remarked, that, in ſuch a caſe, a caſe entirely ſecular, the man would really be juſtified by faith.

In proceeding with the preſent diſcourſe, the queſtion then, you perceive, again recurs, "What ſaith the Scripture?" that is, what ſaith it, as to the bearing of theſe principles and obſervations on the caſe of man and his Maker? What is the reſponſe of the infallible oracle to this *laſt* queſtion ſubmitted to its deciſion? Now, though it is obvious there is here much room for illuſtrative quotation and remark, yet, I really do think, that very few words may ſuffice to put us in poſſeſſion of all that is abſolutely neceſſary to be ſaid; for the inquiry has, in a great meaſure, been anſwered already; the teſtimony

given on the former queſtions did, in anſwering them, inform us that the above principles are recognized, and have been acted upon, in the Divine government; and it did alſo, along with this, include the ſtatement of facts coincident in deſign, nature, and tendency, with thoſe deſcribed, or, if you chooſe, imagined. The view, however, of the principles and facts in ſpeculation and action; the analogy between the ſuppoſed and the real caſe, the ſecular and the ſpiritual, may be briefly exhibited thus:

Recollect and carefully weigh the import of the teſtimony of Scripture already adduced, and ſee if it does not include the recognition of ſuch principles, and the ſtatement of ſuch facts as theſe:—that God's moral government of mankind is government according to law; that the governor is not a deſpot regulating the affairs of his great empire by mere will; that he is to be regarded, therefore, as actually ſuſtaining an official character, recognizing and reſpecting its obligations and duties, as well as poſſeſſing a perſonal character, with its ſenſibility and feeling; that ſin is a grave and capital offence; that, therefore, however, perſonally, God may compaſſionate the ſinner, the arbitrary remiſſion of puniſhment is, officially, impoſſible.—I am much miſtaken, if you do not almoſt intuitively perceive that theſe *principles* are involved in, and give its ſignificancy and point to the ſcriptural evidence already before you. The following *facts* are alſo ſtated, more or leſs directly, in the courſe of it;—that God has compared the conduct and character of men with the requirements of law, and pronounced them offenders; that, therefore, men, as offenders, ſtand expoſed to the puniſhment attached to diſobedience; that the infliction of that puniſhment is, however, graciouſly ſuſpended; and that, in the meantime, an extraordinary meaſure has actually been adopted for the purpoſe of providing what may be appealed to by man as a valid ground for the diſpenſation of pardon. Nothing can be plainer, in my opinion, than that theſe facts are aſſerted by the Scripture teſtimony already heard.

It is thus aſcertained, then, that *ſomething* has been appointed by God, independently of man altogether, which is to be the ground of his juſtification, if ever he is juſtified at all. What we have to do now, therefore, is, to notice the bearing upon this, of the two obſervations before ſubmitted, reſpecting the imagined caſe of ſuch a meaſure being adopted by a human government.

As to the firſt obſervation relating to the *fact* of the appointment irreſpective of the *rationale* of it, a very brief remark or two will ſuffice. We may put it thus. Since there is a certain ſomething appointed, to which I, as a guilty man, am to look; to which I am to refer, ſo to ſpeak, Him at whoſe tribunal I ſtand; and which, thus appealed to, will be admitted, it is promiſed, as an adequate ground for the exerciſe of mercy towards me; tell me *what* that ſomething is, and I will employ and urge it, confiding in *his* perception of its propriety and power, even though, perſonally, I ſhould be unable to perceive *why* it is efficient.—To this demand the Scripture reply is direct; and it includes, too, an inſtructive alluſion illuſtrative of the courſe here promiſed to be purſued. As to the reply; it is contained in ſuch ſtatements as theſe,—"the blood of Jeſus Chriſt—cleanſeth us from all ſin," "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveneſs of ſins." "God *ſent* forth his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin," or a ſin-offering. "He who knew no ſin *was made* ſin," or a ſin-offering, "for us." "Sacrifice and offering," (which are offered by the law), "thou wouldeſt not; but a body haſt thou prepared me:—lo, I come to do thy will, O God!—by the which will we are ſanctified,"—(that is, ſeparated—ſeparated from the guilty, who ſtand expoſed to puniſhment, and contemplated as pardoned and ſaved,)—"through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once *for all.*" "Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion;"—we are redeemed (puniſhment is remitted, we are pardoned or juſtified) by "the precious blood of Chriſt." And ſo on. Now, theſe and ſimilar paſſages, I

regard as conſtituting an explicit and intelligible reply to the demand juſt made. *That thing*, it appears, on account, or in conſideration, of which pardon is granted to man, is the death of Meſſiah or the Chriſt. Whatever ſecondary or additional ideas may be neceſſary to explain the fact, *this is the fact:* as ſuch, it has power with God as the repreſentative, in his official character, of law, whether we ſee *how* it has it or not. And, now, by way of ſhowing how it may be efficient with reſpect to man, even though nothing more were to be known but this, we ſhall quote and illuſtrate the alluſion adverted to above.

This alluſion is contained in theſe words: "As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up: that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life." You all know the hiſtorical fact here referred to. The people had ſinned. They were puniſhed by poiſonous ſerpents being ſent among them. The neceſſary conſequence of being bitten by theſe was death. Nothing could ſave them but ſome direct, we might ſay miraculous, interpoſition which ſhould cut off the connection between the poiſon and its conſequences—the cauſe and the effect. For this purpoſe, Moſes was divinely directed to elevate a brazen ſerpent upon a pole, and to aſſure the ſufferers that all who looked upon it ſhould immediately be healed. Now, in the ſame way, Chriſt, it is ſaid, was, by crucifixion, lifted up from the earth, that all who ſpiritually look to him might ſpiritually live. In neither caſe, you obſerve, thus ſtated, is there any account of the *rationale* of the thing. There is juſt a fact and a promiſe,—the Divine appointment and the Divine pledge. And, to ſee the efficiency of theſe in relation to man, notwithſtanding his ignorance of the former, attend to the following ſuppoſition of what *might* have occurred in the Hebrew camp, and apply it as we proceed to the Chriſtian argument.

Conceive of an Iſraelite reaſoning and acting thus: "I cannot

cannot comprehend this ſingular appointment. What poſſible connection is there between my looking at this object, and my obtaining the promiſed advantage? I ſee not how either the object itſelf, or my regard to it, can prevail with God miraculouſly to interpoſe between me and death. Why ſhould there be this appointment or this requiſition at all? Why may not God hear and anſwer my prayer addreſſed directly to himſelf, altogether irreſpective of this,—addreſſed with earneſt urgency, and prompted by ſincere contrition? Surely this appeal is more likely to be ſucceſsful; it cannot be denied; it is more rational in itſelf, and more conſiſtent with juſt views of *his* character, who is rich in mercy and ready to pardon! I will ariſe and go to him. I have ſinned; I am ſuffering; I am dying: but I will approach even unto his ſeat; I will enter the ſanctuary itſelf; I will proſtrate myſelf before the Lord; I will entreat him to forgive the iniquity of my ſin, and to remove the burden beneath which I groan." Well; this man might go, and might do what he had determined; he might go and offer his earneſt and fervent ſupplication: but, do you think God would hear that prayer? Do you think this kind of devotion would be accepted, or this appeal ſucceſsful? that is, do you believe that theſe perſonal conſiderations would be ſufficient to induce God to work the propoſed miracle? Certainly not. The poiſon would continue to penetrate, and pervade, and burn, even while he was proſtrate before God in the ſanctuary; and there, perhaps, he might die; and, though dying in ſuch a place and in ſuch an exerciſe, he would appear in the Divine preſence, as freſh from the act and attitude of ſin! Now, *another* Iſraelite, juſt as ignorant as this firſt man, of the adaptation, reaſon, and ſo on, of the appointment, but who believed the teſtimony reſpecting it, confided in the promiſe, and had recourſe to it as a fact, leaving the perception of its ſufficiency for the end propoſed, to him who had appointed it; this perſon, would look—and live. The reſemblance between the phyſical and ſpiritual appointment you can

detect

detect for yourſelves. It is perfect, and beautiful, and inſtructive. It fully illuſtrates the preſent obſervation; and with the aſſurance that you will ſee this, we leave it for the next.

In noticing this next and laſt point, we obſerve, that there are ſcriptural teſtimonies of a ſomewhat different character from thoſe hitherto adduced, and that even ſome of thoſe may be viewed as eſtabliſhing *more* than they have yet been employed to prove; that is to ſay, the reſponſe of the infallible oracle, when fully conſidered, will be found not only to ſtate the *fact* which is appointed to conſtitute the ground of pardon, but alſo to explain, in ſome meaſure, *how* it is ſo: there are included in it unqueſtionable intimations reſpecting the neceſſity, and deſign, and reaſon, and nature, and ſo on, of the appointment itſelf; the properties which impart to it its influence, in relation to God; and the power it is adapted to exert on the virtue of man. All that is neceſſary to be ſaid on this and kindred matters, by way of applying the obſervations, formerly advanced, may be comprehended, I think, in the following portions of Scripture teſtimony and illuſtrative remark.

In the firſt place. The previous queſtion of the propriety of a government,—thoſe who repreſent and execute the law, and exerciſe the ſupreme power, in a ſtate—the previous queſtion, of the propriety of ſuch perſons voluntarily providing that, which ſhould warrant in themſelves a departure from the exact letter of the law, and allow the pardon of capital offenders; this, in relation to the Divine government, is ſettled,—ſettled in the affirmative, by the evidence already heard, which ſays, that God has actually done it, actually, and of himſelf, done a certain ſomething to take away the guilt of the world; and whatever he has done in fact, muſt be right in principle. Then, that God's doing this, originated from the circumſtance of his poſſeſſing a perſonal, and ſuſtaining an official character; and that it was intended to harmonize each with the other, and both with law; this, too, I conceive to be ſtated by the witneſs. "God is love"—"God is a conſuming fire." "God

"God deſires not the death of the wicked"—"God hateth the workers of iniquity." Now God could not be and do, both theſe, in the ſame ſenſe, or, in the ſame character; and he could not act excluſively, in either character, without deſtroying the other: and if both were to be regarded, there would be a *neceſſity* for ſome extraordinary meaſure or arrangement, to effect ſuch an end; and this, I imagine, is referred to in ſuch paſſages as the following:—"It *behoved* Chriſt to ſuffer." "It *became* God, in bringing ſons unto glory, to make the Captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings."—Further, that the meaſure *originated* in the perſonal, and was intended to *illuſtrate* the official character of God; that, in fact, it illuſtrates both, and imparts to the intelligent univerſe, higher conceptions of the Divine glory, than if he had acted excluſively in either; theſe ſtatements, I think, are ſuſtained by *this* teſtimony;—"God ſo loved the world,—even when dead in ſins,—that he ſent his Son—to reconcile it to himſelf." "God hath ſet forth his Son, a propitiation, to declare, or diſplay, his righteouſneſs; that he might be juſt, (be ſeen to be juſt,) and the juſtifier of him that believeth." "He is a juſt God and a Saviour." "He hath abounded (in his conduct in this matter) in all wiſdom and prudence;" and hence there is diſplayed, to "principalities and powers, in heavenly places, by the church, (by the means of which it is the reſult, and which conſtitute and keep it what it is,) the manifold wiſdom of God." Then, again, as to the nature of thoſe means, and their mode of operation, or, in other words, the way in which the meaſure alluded to influences the operations of government, it is repreſented thus;—Chriſt "gave himſelf a ranſom." "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us." He died, "the juſt for the unjuſt." More particularly, giving what we take to be the *ſenſe* of the paſſage—"He who knew no ſin, was, on our account, treated as if he were a ſinner; that we, who are ſinners, might, on his account, be treated as if we were righteous." And, that this ſhould be the caſe,—

caſe,—that the work of Chriſt, (as the whole of what Meſſiah did and ſuffered is often comprehenſively termed,) that this ſhould appear to the mind of God an adequate reaſon for the merciful treatment of, that is, for the conferring of ſecondary juſtification upon, thoſe that truſt in him,—is intimated in Scripture to ariſe from two circumſtances, namely, the dignity and the innocence of him who bore (in their effects) "our ſins in his own body on the tree." Theſe two circumſtances are *aſſerted* thus,—"The Word," (deſcribed as "The Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God,") "the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us." "He humbled himſelf," "and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men." "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took—the ſeed of Abraham," "the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh," yet he was "holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners." He was "without blemiſh." He was "the Juſt One." The facts and properties thus aſſerted, are *argued* from, by the Apoſtle, in this way,—eſtabliſhing the point at preſent before us,—"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctify to the purifying of the fleſh; how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works;" that is, from the burden, the guilt, and condemnation of works that deſerve death, namely, *ſins*.

From all that has been advanced, in order to aſcertain how far "the faithful and true witneſs" warrants the application of the principles formerly ſtated to the ſubject of its own teſtimony —from all this, it does ſeem that Scripture, as might be expected, explains, in ſome meaſure, the nature, and propriety, and mode of operation, of that appointment, by means of which mercy is granted to man. It appears that a divinely glorious and immaculately holy perſon, denominated the Son of God, voluntarily "came into our world," "in the likeneſs of men;" that he did homage to law, both by obeying it himſelf, and by ſuſtaining

ſuſtaining towards it the relation of anſwerableneſs for thoſe who did not; that, being regarded in that relation, "it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him;" and to "put him to grief," and to "make his ſoul an offering for ſin;" that thus, the letter of the law was departed from, but in ſuch a manner that the ſpirit and principle of it was moſt eminently maintained and illuſtrated; and that hence, on this account, the law itſelf can conſent to the juſtification of an offender; or God, in his official character, can conſiſtently remit the puniſhment of thoſe who plead the tranſaction as the ground of forgiveneſs. All this can be aſcertained from Scripture, and it can be comprehended. It may be underſtood as well as believed. And hence it is poſſible to apply the laſt idea previouſly ſuggeſted, reſpecting the very proceſs of pardon being favourable to virtue. This is both diſtinctly aſſerted by Scripture, and may be ſeen to follow by way of natural conſequence. Chriſt "loved us" and "laid down his life for us." This is the fact. Then the moral influence of the fact is thus ſtated:—"The love of Chriſt *conſtraineth* us—to live—not to ourſelves—but to Him who died for us and roſe again." We "are bought with a price," therefore "not being our own," we are to glorify him "who bought us," "in our body and ſpirit which are his;" and this can only be done by ſhowing that that "grace which bringeth ſalvation," teaches us to deny "ungodlineſs and worldly luſts," and to "live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly;" becauſe, this is the end propoſed to be accompliſhed by Him who redeemed his people, "that he might ſanctify and cleanſe" them, and make them "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In ſhort, ſo directly is the ground of our forgiveneſs intended to operate upon virtue, and ſo adapted to do it, by way of natural conſequence, from the view which it gives of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, the excellence of law, and the attractions of holineſs; and by the love and gratitude it excites towards God, prompting the deſire, and rendering it eaſy to obey and reſemble Him; that thoſe who, profeſſing the truth, are *not* virtuous, are repreſented as the

the enemies, not ſimply of the precepts and the example, but of the "*croſs*, of Chriſt."

It would have been eaſy to have enlarged upon all the topics thus briefly adverted to, and to have quoted additional paſſages under each. If, however, the principles intended to be illuſtrated and ſuſtained, are really recognized, implied or aſſerted, in thoſe produced, it is enough. One ſcriptural ſtatement is as concluſive as ten; the thing, whatever it be, is in the Record, and muſt, therefore, of neceſſity be received. It may be as well to remind you, too, that it has already been ſhown, that it is no anſwer to ſay that other lower and leſſer things are ſpoken of in connection with this ſubject. The greater includes the leſs. Thoſe who admit the greater can admit the leſs, and can harmonize each with the other, becauſe they are in poſſeſſion of a principle adequate to account, ſo to ſpeak, for *all* the phenomena of the whole of Revelation. It is an axiom in theology, as well as in phyſics, that no more principles are to be admitted than what are neceſſary to account for appearances; but then, it is alſo an axiom, that *as many* muſt be admitted as *are* neceſſary. Now, we do think, that by the view we have taken of the preſent ſubject, every thing contained in Scripture is explicable; while, by any thing ſhort of it, much, very much, muſt remain myſterious.

On the whole, the Scriptures ſeem to decide, that the ground of man's juſtification as a ſubject of God's moral government, is of the nature of the *ſecond* ground of juſtification by favour. It appears, too, that its inherent properties and practical power are ſimilar in kind to what would be required by right reaſon, in a correſpondent proceſs in human affairs.

4.

IN winding up the whole matter, and obſerving how it is that we become intereſted in the propoſed bleſſing, we have only to repeat, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, the obſervations which formed the concluſion

concluſion of the laſt diſcourſe. An authentic document is placed before us, making known this appointed and appropriate ground of juſtification; directing us to depend upon and plead it; explaining ſo much as is neceſſary to conſtitute a rational inducement to our doing ſo; and including poſitive aſſurances of our finding it ſufficient. We believe this; that is, we believe—not ſomething *about* or *concerning* the things ſpoken of—their abſtract truth, or philoſophic beauty, or ſyſtematic completeneſs;—but we believe *the things themſelves;* we receive from the whole truth a correſponding impreſſion on the whole mind; we act under its influence; we humbly, yet "boldly" enter the "holieſt of all;" we fill our mouths with arguments,—ſuch arguments as God has promiſed to regard; by them we direct the Divine eye from our own unworthineſs to *his* worth in whom we confide; that eye beholding there an adequate and equitable reaſon for the exerciſe of mercy, admits and approves the plea; upon this the compaſſion of his perſonal, and the rectitude of his official character completely coincide; "accepted *in* the beloved," our ſin is virtually, and our liability to puniſhment actually, deſtroyed; we are, as to legal conſequences, placed in the condition, and clothed with the character, of thoſe who have vindicated and eſtabliſhed their perſonal virtue; we are regarded and treated *as if we were* juſt; we are pronounced free; we have liberty and life ſecured to us; we are *pardoned;* we are *juſtified;* we are *juſtified by faith.*

That is to ſay;—with reſpect to God, we are juſtified in conſequence of his perception of the inherent ſufficiency of the work of Chriſt, to conſtitute the ground of forgiveneſs; with reſpect to ourſelves, we are juſtified, in conſequence of our reception of the Divine teſtimony concerning it.

5.

THE only remaining object of attention, is to endeavour to detect the point of coincidence between the New Teſtament

ment view of this ſubject, and that involved in the account of "the father of the faithful."

"Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs." "Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead." Now, I think it would be plauſible to ſay, that the point of which we are in ſearch,—the point of coincidence between the patriarch and us, is to be found, not in the identity of the truth believed, but in the identity of the act of believing,—that act, by which both parties equally exerciſe truſt or confidence in the moral character and moral aſſurances of the ſame Being. It might be ſaid, that Abraham did not believe that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was raiſed from the dead,—that truth was not preſented to him; and, that we do not believe that our poſterity are to be like the ſands on the ſea-ſhore,—that truth is not preſented to *us*: but both, it might be added, do believe, with equal confidence, ſuch truths as are reſpectively preſented to each. The illuſtration of the argument might then advance in this way:—Abraham believed what God promiſed reſpecting his ſeed in general, and Iſaac in particular; he believed that, even though Iſaac ſhould periſh on the altar, he would be raiſed up again from the dead, and that all that God had ſpoken would unqueſtionably be fulfilled. We believe that God *has* raiſed up his own Son from the dead, "who was delivered for our offences, and raiſed again for our juſtification;" and we, too, believe, that all that God has ſpoken of our obtaining mercy through him, will unqueſtionably be fulfilled. The mental act in the two caſes are identical, though the propoſitions are not. Confidence the ſame in kind, is placed in promiſes the ſame in their origin, though different in nature. Neither the one nor the other of us has a perſonal righteouſneſs, in conſequence of which we can claim to be declared *juſt*; but both the one and the other have *that*, which He with whom we have to do, has

has promiſed to make the occaſion of treating us *as if we were.*

I once thought this was the proper explanation. Further thought, however, leads me to reject it. The following reaſons ſeem ſufficient to warrant that rejection. In the firſt place, it cannot be, that the mere belief of any truth whatever can poſſeſs ſuch moral excellence, ſuch meritorious efficiency, as, in itſelf, to conſtitute the ground of the forgiveneſs of ſin. It would be very wrong *not* to believe the ever bleſſed God,—"the God that cannot lie;" this would be a flagrant inſult to eternal truth; but, juſt for this very reaſon, the admiſſion of his teſtimony can hardly be conſidered a thing as likely to appear to him ſo ſingularly virtuous. Again. The above opinion will make the ground of juſtification different with reſpect to different individuals; there would thus be a difference inſtead of an identity in the feeling and the ſong of the redeemed in heaven? Further. To make faith or believing, viewed ſimply in itſelf and as our act, the ground of forgiveneſs, would afford reaſon for boaſting, and ſubvert the capital Scripture truth of ſalvation by grace. Once more. The opinion in diſpute would virtually make juſtification the reſult of an arbitrary appointment, an act of *mere* prerogative, of perſonal irreſponſible will, which would contradict what has already been proved reſpecting moral government, or government according to law, which is the nature of the Divine. Laſtly. It would be at variance with what appears to be the ſenſe of other Scriptures, in which the point of coincidence between Abraham and us ſeems obviouſly alluded to, perhaps we might ſay, explained. Let us obſerve what theſe are.

You may remark, then, in general, that Abraham was a believer, had given proofs of faith, and was therefore, I apprehend, in a juſtified ſtate, previous to the time in which the expreſſion quoted by the Apoſtle occurs in his hiſtory. The very promiſe, too, with which it is connected, had been given before. The words are to be found in the fifteenth

chapter

chapter of Geneſis, appended, apparently, to a ſtatement reſpecting the patriarch's ſeed; but the ſame promiſe, ſubſtantially, is found at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, and you will obſerve it is there recorded as what *had* been ſaid to Abraham at the time of his call, that is, when he was firſt ſeparated from ſurrounding idolaters, and brought into a new relation to God. It is alſo found repeated and amplified in the twenty-ſecond chapter, at the period when the patriarch's faith was "perfected," was fully evinced to be ſincere, by its moſt conſpicuous and ſplendid manifeſtation. On the whole, I am inclined to think, firſt, that the expreſſion is to be regarded not ſo much as a particular ſtatement referring to the particular period in which it occurs, as a general ſtatement of the general fact, that it was by believing God, and not by obeying any law, that Abraham was juſtified. Then, ſecondly, as to the particular truth to which he had reſpect; as to *what it was* on which his faith terminated, and on account of which it availed to juſtification; that ſeems to be explained by Paul in a manner which accounts for the frequent recurrence of the promiſe to which we have been referring; and which gives the expreſſion, juſt deſcribed as a general ſtatement, a particular and ſpecific ſignificance in connection with that promiſe.

The apoſtolic explanation to which we refer, is contained in the third chapter of the Epiſtle to the Galatians, and may be gathered from the following paſſages. It ſtarts, you will perceive, as a general argument, oppoſing and contraſting faith and works,—promiſe and law; and then it advances to a particular explanation of *that* faith, and *that* promiſe, by which Abraham was juſtified. Theſe we ſhall ſee, in the end, to be identical with our own.

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—He therefore that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and

and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham." So far all is general. Works of the law, and the hearing of faith, are broadly contraſted. In what follows, the line of obſervation is narrowed, and the preciſe nature of *that* "hearing of faith," which juſtifies and ſaves, is diſtinctly illuſtrated. "The Scripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the Goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed." "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curſe;" but "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us;" "that the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith." "Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. And this I ſay, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe: but God gave it to Abraham by promiſe. Wherefore then ſerveth the law?" "The law was our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith." "And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe."

Now, from all this we learn,—that the Goſpel was preached to Abraham; that the covenant made with Abraham was confirmed in Chriſt; that the bleſſing which comes upon us through Chriſt, is the bleſſing of Abraham; that the promiſe reſpecting the ſeed of the patriarch had a reference to Chriſt; that for us to be in Chriſt, and heirs of the inheritance, is juſt to be what Abraham was, and to enjoy what he enjoyed. *That* which Abraham believed, therefore, and in virtue of which he was juſtified, was the aſſurance, however imperfectly communicated,

communicated, of the pardon of ſin through the merit of Meſſiah. It was the Goſpel in anticipation. With this view of the matter, as given by Paul, Peter, in the third chapter of the "Acts," appears to coincide. "Ye are the children—of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed." Therefore, "unto you firſt, God, having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." But ſtill more ſtrongly is our argument ſuſtained by the memorable expreſſion of the Lord himſelf—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw it, and was glad."

On the whole, the point of coincidence between the patriarch and ourſelves ſeems to be this. Abraham believed in a Saviour to come; we, in one who has appeared. In relation to himſelf, he was juſtified in conſequence of his dependance on the Divine teſtimony concerning that Saviour; in relation to God, he was juſtified becauſe that dependance pointed to *Him* who, "in the fulneſs of time," was to "give his life a ranſom for many." In all ages, the ground of juſtification has been the ſame as to the *fact*, however indiſtinctly revealed and partially apprehended; and the faith of the juſtified has been "counted for righteouſneſs" only in conſideration of its uniting them with *it*. He who, in himſelf, is "the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever," has alſo, in his aſſumed functions and mediatorial worth, been virtually ſo, in the view of the Divine mind, and in his efficient relation to the church. "He is the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world." He will be adored throughout the coming eternity by all of every diſpenſation, as "Him in whom they obtained redemption, through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace."

"Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? Seeſt thou then how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made

made perfect?" Abraham, it appears, was juſtified by works as well as by faith; that is, by the one he was evinced to be, what he regarded himſelf in conſequence of the other. On account of his faith, a perſon is treated as what he is *not*; on account of his works, he is treated as what he *is*. In the former caſe he is pardoned as a ſinner; in the latter he is approved as a ſaint. I believe in the merit of good works: only, obſerve what *kind* of merit it is. Good works have no power to procure our pardon, but, as ſpringing from faith, they *have* a merit in relation to reward. He who abounds in them is not only a better man than he who does not, but, as a believer, he is accumulating the only properties that will paſs the judgment-ſeat. The queſtion at the bar of Chriſt will not be, *do* you—but *did* you believe? and the proof will be reſted, not upon the ſplendour of external profeſſion, nor the exerciſe of eloquent gifts, nor even the performance of miracles themſelves; but it will be reſted upon the "perfecting" of faith by the actings of that love which faith leads to, and which prompts to the moſt cheerful and the moſt ſtrenuous fulfilling of the law. The works to which we refer, though works coincident with law, are not works *of* law; that is, they are not done in obedience to law *as a covenant*, and intended to be preſented to Juſtice, as a perſonal claim to acquittal and to recompence; but they are works congenial with the *ſpirit* of law, regulated by it as a rule, flowing from gratitude, and intended to be humbly preſented to Mercy,—preſented as an outward and intelligible token of the inward and practical ſincerity with which the mind repoſed on its proviſion and its promiſes. It is thus that the ſaint is juſtified as well as the ſinner. And it is his delight that it is ſo. Holineſs is the element of joy, and law is the meaſure of holineſs. It is the glory of unfallen natures to be under it and obey it; it is the conſummation of grace to induce in *us* a ſympathy with *them*. The completeneſs of this ſympathy will conſtitute at once our reward and our perfection; the

diſplay of its exiſtence now, is eſſential to the evidence of a juſtified ſtate. "A man may *ſay* he has faith;" but, unleſs it be "made perfect" by *works*, no one to whom he ſays it, is bound to believe him.

6.

WE are thus brought to the general concluſion of all we had projected on the character of Abraham. As in former diſcourſes we illuſtrated the devotional and practical reflections inſpired by the ſubject, it is unneceſſary to detain you now by any ſuch remarks. In cloſing, however, the whole ſeries to which the hiſtory of this eminent believer has given riſe,—a ſeries which has occupied the mornings of ſeven Sabbaths; upon which ſome thought has been expended; and in the courſe of which many important principles have been developed; a number of feelings are excited, which, if time permitted, we ſhould be glad to expreſs. Whether we are or not, we certainly *ought* to be both wiſer and better for the view we have taken of the patriarch's excellence. Our confidence in God ſhould be ſtronger; we ſhould be better prepared for trial; our minds ſhould be more familiar with the fact that we are but "pilgrims on the earth," and our hopes ſhould be more firmly fixed on the futurity beyond it.—In taking leave of the patriarch, we feel as if we were parting from a friend, with whom we had travelled far and long; with whom we had taken ſweet counſel, and who, as we advanced, had gained on our affections. We experience a ſort of reluctance to approach the laſt word;—we are conſcious of ſomething like regret, in cloſing the ſubject, as if it reminded us of the termination of all human engagements, and warned us that "the end of all things is at hand."—"The fathers, where are they? and the prophets—the patriarchs—do they live for ever?" Yes, they *do* live for ever. God is at this moment

moment "the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob; and he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." "Life and immortality have been brought to light by the Goſpel." "The darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth." "Let us be followers of thoſe who through faith and patience are inheriting the promiſes." Let us often reflect upon the happineſs of ſuch as ſhall compoſe "the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born," who ſhall be "gathered together from the ends of the earth, and the iſles of the ſea;" "who ſhall come unto Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and to Jeſus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling;"—who, "waſhed in that blood,"—"cleanſed, and juſtified, and ſanctified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus and by the Spirit of our God," ſhall be preſented to him, at length, as a perfect church, having neither ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing."—May the God of Abraham grant that you and I may be there.

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